SECTION III

THE ELEMENT OF RUBATO

Tempo-continuity, why necessary.

ONE cause of the failure of the inexperienced to keep in view the *whole* of a piece (while trying to be careful of its details) lies in their non-realisation of the fact already insisted upon: that there must always be *continuity in the tempo* if the course of the piece is to remain unbroken.

Remember, every time you change the *tempo*, your listener has to start afresh with you, and has to readjust himself to the new *tempo*. This engenders a complete disorganisation of the piece, if it is a continuous composition; and if this varying of the *tempo* is persisted in, not only does it lead to discomfort, but to positive irritation, although the listener may remain unaware of the actual *cause* of his troubles.

A simple cure in this case is to make your pupil walk round the room several times, and to insist on his suddenly altering his gait-tempo every few steps. This will make him look and feel such a lunatic, that he will remember the lesson for the rest of his days.

Continuity also depends on tonal and emotional planning-out.

Continuity in performance, of course, does not depend solely on obedience to this law of *continuity of tempo;* it depends also upon the due planning-out of the Tone-values, and upon the correct planning-out of the emotional stress of the piece.

In this planning-out a gradual increase and decrease of *tempo* itself may often help as well as such variations applied to tone-differences. But this leads me to the discussion of a detail of expression which, while it is one of the

most powerful and potent, is at the same time one of the least understood. And it is one which is most rarely taught correctly (even when the attempt is made) since it involves a principle believed to be mysterious, although its comprehension is perfectly simple. I allude to THE PRINCIPLE OF RUBATO.[1]

True nature of Rubato, usually quite misunderstood.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say, that Rubato is generally quite misunderstood, even by those who may themselves apply it correctly enough in their own performances.

Often enough I hear of teachers who tell their pupils they "must not play Rubato." Such teachers find themselves compelled to take this step, simply because their pupils have not been correctly shown *how* to keep time, nor the real significance of Rubato; and because these pupils therefore play absurdly meaningless *ritardos* and *accellerandos*, in place of the required musically-helpful and true Rubatos.

Again, it seems incredible that any musician in his senses could make the absurd mistake of supposing that Rubato implies any *breaking* of time. Yet I know of a number of instances where quite well-known professors deliberately tell their pupils: "*You must not play Chopin in time!*"

Rubato is no mystery, it is neither "silent-sound" nor "telepathy."

[1] Since I first gave this lecture, an amusing case in point has presented itself. In a book recently published (apparently for the sole purpose of abusing my technical teachings) the author realises that there must be a *something* apart from tone-inflection, which plays a very important part in musical expression; but, wanting as he is in that very faculty of "analysis" which he so much deprecates and despises — that "rationalism" which he so vehemently girds against — he fails to diagnose what is the true nature of this, to him, mysterious Something. Hence he lands himself in quagmires of verbiage, in "telepathy," and in hibernianisms, such as "silent sound," etc. Not possessing this despised analytical faculty he, in his blindness, fails to run to earth and diagnose this very "rational" but necessary element of *Rubato*, as the cause of his supposed "silent sound" and "telepathic" effects!

Of course, both these classes of professors are equally in the wrong — those who object to Rubato, and those who condone Time-breaking — and their teachings only prove too conclusively how thoroughly they have failed to grasp the true nature of Rubato as an important and all-pervading Means of Expression. True, their musical sense is strong enough to make them feel that Time must often diverge from a sheer straight line, but so little reasoning power have these artists (yes, they play quite passably) that they are quite unable to analyse what they, themselves, unconsciously succeed in doing in order to prevent this very "squareness" which they quite justly loathe; and such teachers thus find themselves at an *impasse*, for they cannot find a way of rectifying the musical chaos into which they have misled their pupils!

It really amounts to crass stupidity in the case of men who have worked at their profession for years, although it may be regarded as a pardonable sin in the case of inexperienced young teachers.

Ritardos and Accelleran-dos are not Rubato.

Now, as I insist on the absolute necessity for *continuity* in the performance of a continuously built-up composition, and as this can only be secured by insisting upon *continuity of tempo*, it follows, that constantly recurring *ritardos* and *accellerandos* are inadmissible as a means of expression.[1] Nevertheless, in playing, we are often compelled to adopt a device employed in ordinary speech, a device to which we resort when we wish to emphasise words *without raising the voice;* for we are then compelled to give *more time to those words.*

[1] Ritardos and *accellerandos* (in place of Rubato) are often marked by mistake by composers who have not carefully enough analysed the performance of their own works. *See* Notes, pages 38, 71 and 89.

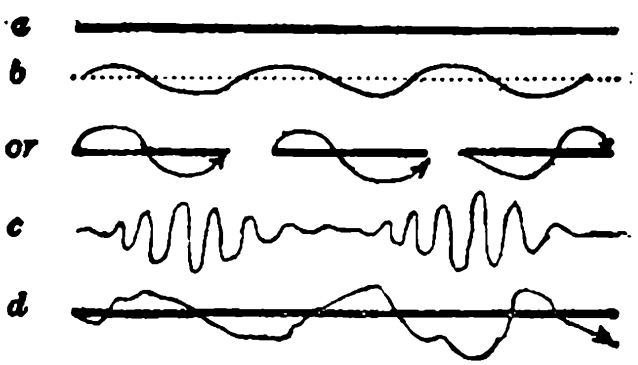
The true rationale of Rubato.

Herein, then, we perceive the foundation and necessity of Rubato: we wish to emphasise certain notes without giving them undue *tonal* emphasis and we then naturally *dwell more on those notes* — we spend more time upon them than is their natural due. But, as continuity in *Tempo* remains inexorable the only way to reconcile these two apparently opposite requirements (those of continuity and time-leaning) is to *bend* the Time and not to break it. If, therefore, we wish to give extra time to certain notes, we must correspondingly take away time from *other* notes, to make up for the extra time thus spent; or again, if we wish to hasten certain notes of a passage, we must delay other notes correspondingly for the same reason; and thus we shall be able rigidly to keep to our Tempo outline, in spite of all this Time-bending and swerving.

Time-curves constantly required.

In fact, we may, and should in nearly all music, thus *curve* round the line of an otherwise straight-on Pulse, but while we do this we must never forget the line's true position in Time-space. An analogy can be shewn to the eye by contrasting a straight line with another drawn in curves or otherwise ornamented, since such ornamentation need not destroy the true basic linear progression. *See a, b* and *c*, Exp. 25:

EXAMPLE 25.



a, b and *c* in above example may be used to denote Rubato; whereas *d* is a *bad* Rubato, since the space covered on each side of the horizontal line does not here balance — does not "lead back to the pulse."

Thus in Rubato, we may seemingly disregard the pulse, or even the bar-lines for several recurrences, and yet we must never, while giving such Time-curves, lose sight of the place where the bar-line or pulse does recur *at the end* of such Rubato. We see therefore that Rubato-playing, so far from implying any weakness rhythmically, on the contrary demands a particularly strongly cultivated feeling for Pulse. Otherwise, when in a Rubato we are compelled to omit allusion to the pulse for several of its normal recurrences-places, we shall be unable to swing-back, or recur to it with the requisite accuracy at the end of such Rubato.[1]

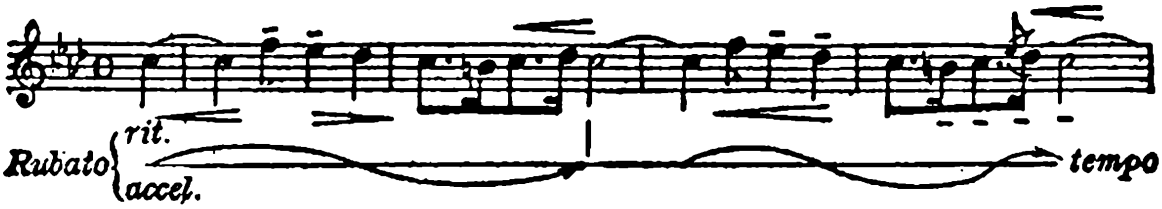
Rubato in modern music.

No modern music is at all tolerable without the proper application of Rubato — and much of it. To hear a Chopin Nocturne for instance, or a more modern work played without Time-inflections is indeed (for anyone at all sensitive, musically) a horrible experience. Let me give you a taste of this, and show you what the *absence* of Rubato really signifies. I will play a few bars from Chopin's F minor Nocturne, first *without* the proper Rubato and then *with* it:

EXAMPLE 26*a*.



EXAMPLE 26*b*.



[1] Rubato, in fact, demands a Pulse-sense so strong and full of vitality, that it will enable us to feel a pulse (or Beat) unwaveringly, although its rhythmical recurrences may be so slow (or deferred) as to cover a whole phrase at a time — nay, sometimes half-a-page or a whole page of Piano music.

Rubato in older music.

But while it is clear enough that modern music is quite impossible without Rubato, we shall find that most of the older music also requires it in a measure — although very subtly applied. Beethoven requires it less than the other older great Masters, but even with him it is not totally absent. Bach certainly admits it in a measure, and Mozart obviously needs it quite markedly, although subtly applied. We know from Mozart's own letters that he used it greatly, and much to the astonishment, mystification, and probable confusion of his contemporaries.

Fallacy re the old masters being unemotional.

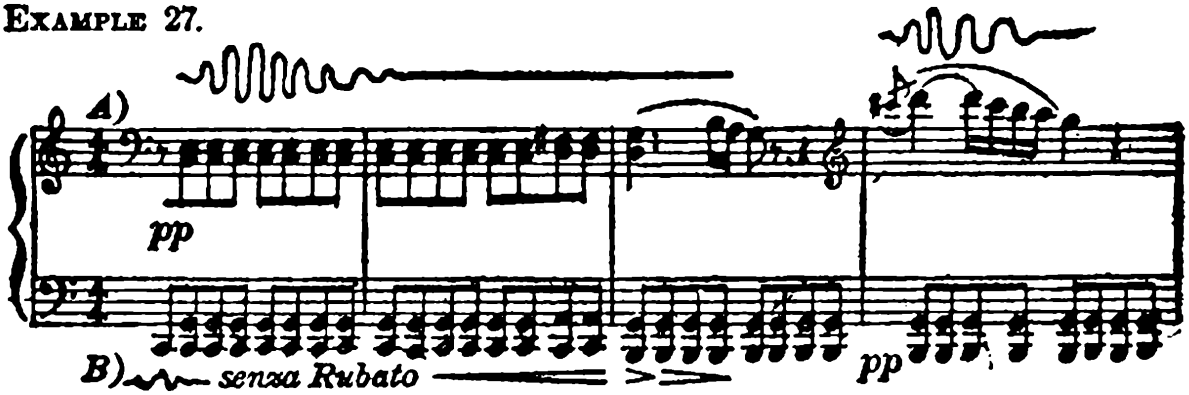
This leads me to a digression. I must protest against the tendency amongst some to imagine that because a great Master lived so many years ago, because his body has long been dead and buried, his music must also be in a sense dead — unemotional, un-alive and passionless. Could there be a more fatuitous mistake! Surely, all these great Masters were pulsating, living beings, *at least* quite as alive and fervent as we are, as emotional, as full of passion, as full of strong feeling and thought as the best of us to-day, and probably far more so! Indeed, is it not evident, that it is just because they had such phenomenal Enthusiasm for their art, because they had such phenomenal feeling and vitality —and reasoning power—that they were able to give us such masterpieces? Then again, the records we have of their playing, are they records of Mendelssohnian cold glitter? Do we not read just the contrary? Yet it is pretended by some, to-day, that it is not "classical" to put any human emotion into Beethoven or Bach! . . . Indeed, there are some signs lately that Chopin — of all people — is soon to be relegated to the realm of the cold and dead — and "classic."[1]

[1] But what a misunderstanding of a term! Should not "classical" signify that perfect *balance* of the emotional and the intellectual which is the very foundation of all true art? There is no such "balance" if we delete the emotional.

In giving emotional life, shape must not be lost sight of.

Now, please do not misunderstand me to maintain that Beethoven and Bach are to be treated in the manner of Schumann, Brahms, Chopin and Debussy! It is true, indeed, that the more shapely, the more architectural the music, the less ornately may it be treated. To smudge over the majestic arches, columns and domes of a really fine cathedral with tinselly colours and gew-gaws, is of course nothing short of a crime. But do not let us pretend that we can see the cathedral without *light* — without the strong shadows and colours, and mysteries — and rhythm — which light brings with it! As I have already said, in playing great works, works continuous and large in their construction, such as are Beethoven's, we must often restrain the impulse to colour each detail too strongly, lest we lose sight of the larger shapes of the piece, its general feeling and the majestic progression of its great proportions. We must play Beethoven not sentimentally, but we must play him with sentiment — with strong feeling, and dramatically. Let me play you a few bars of the "Waldstein" Sonata as I have heard them abused, and then with the correction of this mawkishness.[1] Thus: (A) with Rubato — incorrect; (B) almost without Rubato — correct.

EXAMPLE 27.



[1] In these Rubato examples the ~~~ sign is sometimes used for time-inflection (analogously to the tone-inflection sign < >). Where the sign swells out the time broadens out. At other times a curve below or above a horizontal line is employed to denote the Rubato.

Seeing then the exceeding importance of *Rubato*, it behoves us to teach it as soon as practicable — even to the child. It should be taught as early as possible: firstly, because a rhythmical sense can be acquired with comparative ease while young; and secondly, because of the extreme importance of Rubato in all modern music. And, of course, the child must begin its musical experiences with music of to-day and not of yesterday, for the average child cannot easily learn to think in a past idiom until it has had considerable experience of present day music.[1]

When to teach and learn Rubato.

[1] This does not mean that we should feed his young mind on Freak-music, nor on Flimsiness. Yet there is no greater mistake than to imagine that because music itself has appeared in a certain order of evolvement, therefore it must be brought to the young mind in a similar order; and that we must, therefore, begin with the most difficult and complex intellectually, the most subtle emotionally, and the most wonderful of all the great Masters, Bach — a fine topsy-turvydom indeed! I must confess, for my own part, that I have still not entirely overcome my repugnance to and prejudice against Milton's "Paradise Lost," which was rammed down my throat long before it could be possible for me to digest it, before I could hope to see those beauties in it which I am quite prepared to believe may be there, but which are still closed from my vision because of the folly of my early teachers. Here, also, is the place to protest against the folly of giving deadly-dull and unmusical pieces and studies to children. How can the child learn to love music by being soaked in Non-music? Leagues of such waste-material, supposed to be "easy," are turned out and dumped upon the market as "teaching pieces" by the publishers — sheer platitudes, without a spark of invention or imagination or rhythmical life, saying nothing and meaning nothing, and such stuff is supposed to *teach* Music to children! No wonder so many look upon their practice-hour with loathing! This crime could not be possible, were it not that the average would-be teacher seems to be totally wanting in musical judgement, and hence quite fails to perceive the deadly-poisonous nature of this commercial shoddy-material. For with a little trouble, there is plenty of real music obtainable quite within the ordinary child's grasp, and therefore stimulating to him — and also to the teacher; hence, there

The problem of music for children.

Almost every child can learn perfectly well to feel pulse, to feel Time, if taught on the right lines — if taught from the outset to see (as I have already insisted) that music consists of progression or movement, progression or movement as regards Tune, progression as regards Harmony,

is no excuse for the use of material which is disheartening to and paralysing in its influence on both.

We must always remember, too, that the child is more likely to be in tune with present-day idiom than with that of a past generation. We have masterpieces for children written by such natural musicians as Poldini, and other foreign successful writers, such as Jensen, Godard, Ole Olsen, Theo. Kullak, Grieg, etc., while many worthy modern British names might also be mentioned, for instance, John Kinross, Felix Swinstead, Carlo Albanesi, Cuthbert Nunn, and many others. Some few exceptional children also are open to an appeal from the classics (such as Corelli, Scarlatti, Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven) but one should be sure of this, before immersing them in an idiom far removed from that natural to them.

If, however, such children obviously do enjoy the older classics, there is no reason why they should not be allowed to become familiar with some of the lighter works, or such a truly *modern* work as the Chromatic Fantasia — although, of course, no child can possibly fully realise the subtle feeling of such "grown-up" music.

In connection with all this, an interesting question was put to me at one of my lectures. It was asked "at the same time is it not necessary that music of the earlier writers should be brought before children as *literature*, and in quantities large enough to leave a definite impression of each great composer's characteristics?" The answer is, that each case must be taken on its own merits — what is poison for some may be meat for others. But *no* music, however good, should be forced upon anyone before they are ready to enjoy it; else we always risk creating a loathing for all music, instead of a love for it. One must therefore begin gradually and tentatively. Give the children music which they can enjoy (and that will probably be quite modern in feeling) and from this gradually lead them to perceive that which is in an idiom more difficult for them, an older idiom, or one more complex, and hence more difficult to master. Lead always from the simple to the complex in idiom, in con-

and above all things, progression as regards Pulse and Rhythm. Obviously, it is also found quite easy for the child to take the next step, and to learn to divide these Pulses up into all kinds of details — always remember, details of *progression*. Now if the child can learn to do all this — and can learn to feel portions of time *less* than the Pulse, surely, it is only one step further for the child to learn accurately to notice the recurrence of more widely distributed beats or pulses — those recurring at wider intervals, while omitting for the moment any reference to the in-between beats — as required in Rubato.

struction, and in feeling; lead from the idiom of to-day to an understanding of that of yesterday. Of course we find exceptional cases, as I have said before, of little geniuses of nine or ten who are quite prepared to love Bach and ready to see much of its true feeling.

As to trying to teach children the "characteristics" of the various great composers, is this not somewhat on a par with teaching the *events* of History to children, and expecting them to learn the lessons and draw the conclusions therefrom, conclusions which history may possibly teach to a few of their elders, provided such historical successions of events are analysed so as to lay bare the evolution of the race, of institutions, of ideas, etc?

Is it not premature to try to make mere children realise the "distinctive characteristics of style" say between a Shelley and a Browning, a Shakespeare and a Milton, a Swinburne and a Rosetti? Besides, where is the harm if they do not so distinguish for a time? The main thing is teach them to enjoy and love Music. As to the teacher, that is another matter, the various composers demand differences of treatment, hence the teacher must understand such distinctions.

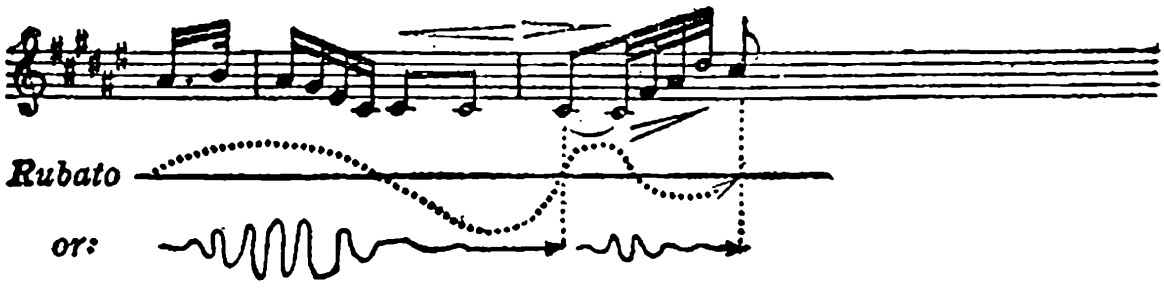
The two distinct fundamental forms of Rubato: (I) the "Leaning Rubato."

To come to details: to begin with, we must notice that Rubato can take *two* quite distinct forms. The most usual is that in which we emphasise a note (or a number of notes) by giving *more* than the expected Time-value, and then subsequently make-up the time thus lost by accelerating the *remaining* notes of that phrase or idea so as to enable us accurately to return to the pulse. This return to the pulse must always occur at the most important point or note of the phrase — that is, near its end. Remember, this law is inexorable, we must always look ahead, and *come back* to the pulse at the chief syllable of the phrase, however much we may have swerved from it beforehand. Indeed, the very fact of our returning to the main pulse after having swerved from it forms the strongest means of emphasis we can give to any note.

Rubato gives the strongest form of emphasis.

For instance:

EXAMPLE 28*a*. (Nocturne F sharp — *Chopin*.) [1]



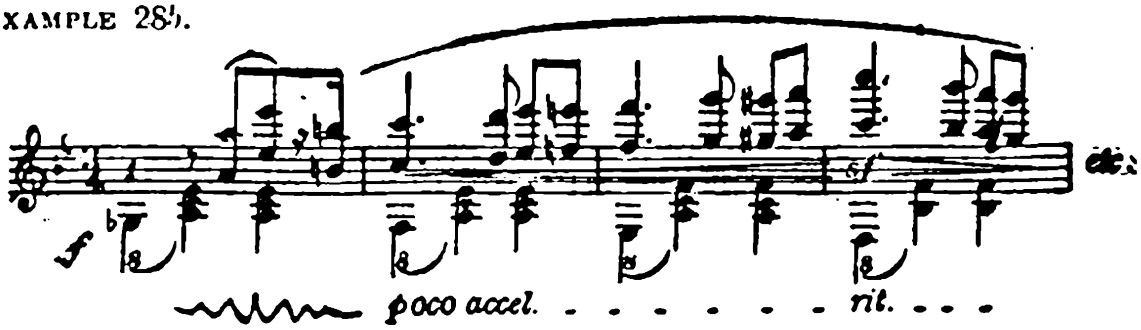
[1] Here we have a double Rubato: the main Rubato is caused by wavering over the first notes of the phrase, and the delay thus caused must be made up by hurrying over the first two quaver C sharps, so as to bring us back to the pulse accurately at the bar-line — the chief syllable of the phrase, with its resolution of the dominant harmony of the previous bar; and a smaller, subsidiary Rubato then prevents the subsequent demisemiquavers (32nd notes) from appearing square — this subsidiary rubato being in the form of a slight lingering over the first C sharp of that bar, while the time is again made up by a corresponding acceleration of these demisemiquavers towards the final note of the phrase, which thus forms an unaccented (or "feminine") phrase-ending. Played any other way, the phrase would prove totally unmusical. Both time-swerves (even the first one) are here most delicate and minute.

In the opposite form of Rubato (it might be termed *inverted* rubato) we begin with a pushing-on or hurrying the time. This we must necessarily follow up by retarding the subsequent notes of the phrase. This retard serves (like the corresponding swing-back of the *first* form of Rubato) to bring us back again, at the phrase-climax, into unison with our Pulse. And this phrase-climax, I would remind you, is *near the end* of the phrase. *See* Exp. 28*b*, and pp. 36—41, 70, 73.

(II) the "push-on" Rubato.

"Valse noble" from Carnival, *Schumann.*[1]

EXAMPLE 28*b*.



Moreover, these two forms of Rubato may be combined even in a single phrase. In fact, such *compound* Rubato is far more usual than the simple uncombined variety.

The two Rubato forms may be combined.

[1] Here it is well to point out that we must not allow ourselves to be misled by the inaccurate markings found in the texts of editors and of the composers themselves. Chopin, Schumann and Brahms, for instance, are constantly found to have marked *Ritardos*, when they have really meant the Rubato swinging-back of a rhythm after a preceding (but unmarked) accellerando; and *vice versa*, they have often marked *accellerandos* when they have failed to note the preceding causal ritardos. The simple explanation is that they have failed properly to diagnose the means of performance actually required for their own music!

Ritardos and Accelleran-dos in text, often found to be incor-rectly noted Rubatos.

Schumann, in his first *Nachtstück*, for instance, could not have meant a constant breaking up of the piece! No doubt in his own playing of it, he had noticed certain places where ritardos *apparently* occurred and he promptly noted these down. But he had failed to notice the *preceding accelerandos*, which are the *cause* of the swerve and balance in the Time-pulses, and which enable the piece to be perfectly continuous, while allowing a full portrayal of its agitated feeling.

The exact position of the return to the pulse must be noted.

Another noteworthy point is, that in teaching Rubato, the only thing we can determine with *exactitude* is the *position* of the *return to the pulse;* for the actual extent of a rubato-curve may, and should vary with the mood of the performer, just as in the case of the analogous tone-curves. The actual nature of the curve itself is also thus variable; but not so the return to the pulse — that always has a definite and invariable position for each phrase.

The cause of the Rubato also to be noted.

We should also, in every case, note the cause of each Rubato, the place where the Rubato is *begun*; that is, whether the Rubato is caused (in the earlier part of the phrase) by a "leaning" emphasis or retardation, or by a "push-on" or hurrying of the time, or whether the two kinds of Rubato are combined in the phrase under consideration.

Moreover, the actual extent of a Rubato-curve varies greatly, since we may use a Rubato to emphasise a single note only, or we may use it to give a graceful curve to a whole phrase as in so many of Chopin's works, for instance his Berceuse, C minor Nocturne, etc., or even to a whole section of a movement as elsewhere in Chopin, for instance in his F minor Ballade, Fantasie-Polonaise, etc.

Rubato allows a phrase-climax to be shown in decrescendo.

Rubato, in fact, will enable us to make clear the climax of a phrase even with a *decrescendo* progression towards its climax; for, as already pointed out, it is a most striking fact, that the return to the pulse, (after having swerved away from it) forms the most potent kind of emphasis we can give to any note.[1]

In speaking of a Phrase-climax, it is of course understood that this invariably occurs either at or near the end of the

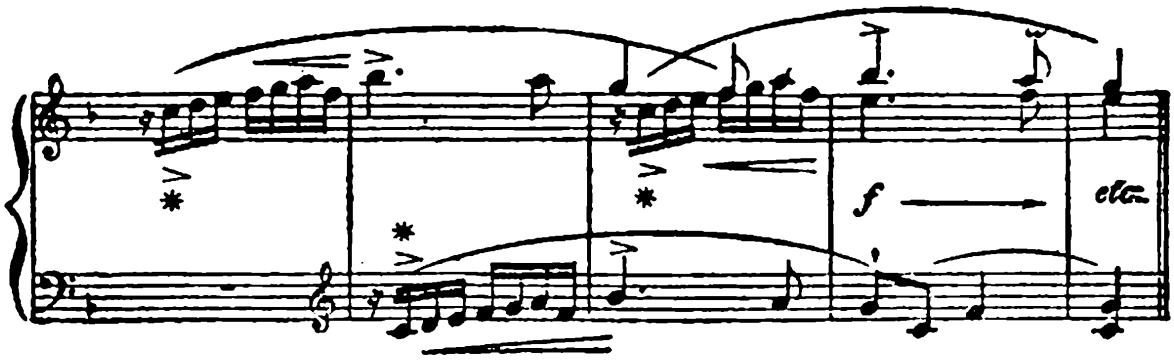
[1] Strictly speaking, there can be no Rubato "on one note"; but we may draw attention to a single note by employing a Rubato before or after it. *See* note, page 74.

phrase. This may seem unnecessary reiteration after what I have shown to be the nature of a phrase— its consisting always of a progression of notes *leading up to* a cadence, but I have found it gravely and deliberately mis-stated in some "instruction" books, that the accent of a phrase "is always at its beginning"— than which there could not well be anything further from the truth, musically! Possibly this mistake has arisen from the fact that the first note of a phrase *does* sometimes require a slight accent, to give the effect of "good attack." Such slight accents are, of course, in the nature of "cross accents," since they go against the feeling of the straight-on progression. They are required especially where the phrases and motives, etc., commence against the grain (as it were) of the music, as so often found in BACH, and the older Masters. Thus:

Fallacy regarding position of phrase-climax.

Attack of phrase.

EXAMPLE 29.



But always bear in mind, no amount of such "attack" on a first note must be allowed to mar or weaken the sense of *progression* of the phrase towards its climax or crisis.[1]

[1] Most of the music-material of the old Masters commences on an unaccented portion of the rhythm. This rule often holds good even in the case of apparent exceptions. For instance, the Fugue from Bach's Chromatic Fantasia starts *on* a bar-line so far as eye-appearances are concerned. It is written in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, but the theme is truly in $\frac{6}{4}$ time, and starts with a half-bar of this time; hence there is here no exception after all.

Various forms of Rubato illustrated: (I) The more usual or "leaning" Rubato.

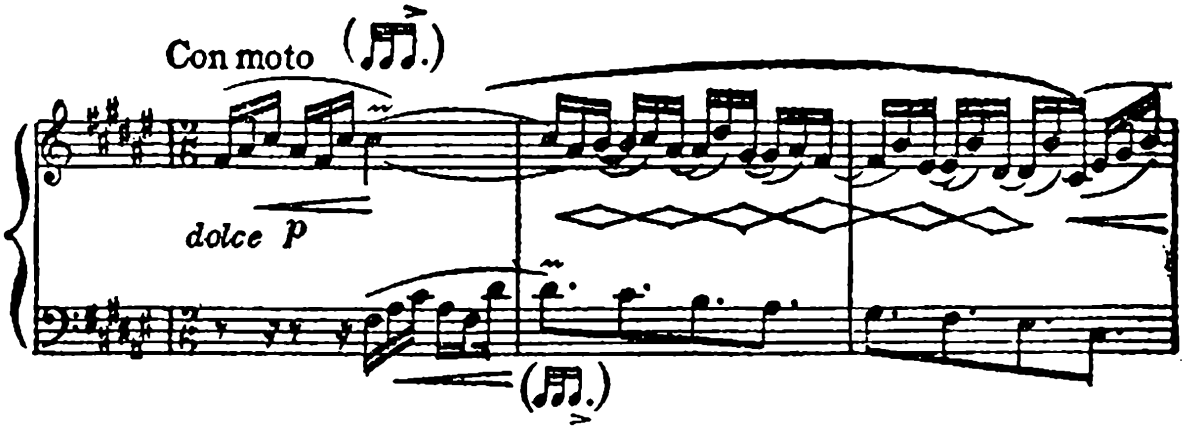
We will now take some illustrations of these various forms of Rubato. First, we will take the single note emphasis, and as so many people imagine BACH to be Rubato-less, let us take his prelude in F sharp. The Rubato is here very slight indeed. Probably, if I did not point it out, you would not notice its influence — but then, Rubato-inflections should never be applied so disproportionately as to become noticeable *as such*.[1]

All means of expression must always be applied solely to express music.

The fact is, that *no means* of expression (whatever their nature) must ever be allowed to force themselves upon the attention. They must never be applied so coarsely as to become obvious as such to the listener.[2] I will now play the first bars of this Prelude, first *with* these so very necessary (although slight) rubato-inflections, and then *without* them, and you will realise how dismal and unmusically stiff the effect is without Rubato — although it is Bach!

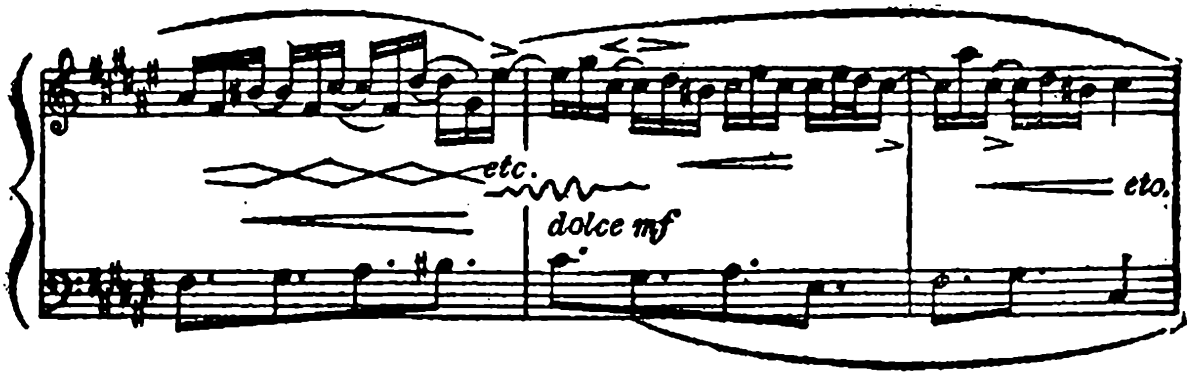
The lecturer here played the first bars of Bach's Prelude in F sharp, with the proper (very slight) Time-leanings on the tied notes, thus:

EXAMPLE 30.



[1] Some even object that slight *Rubatos*, such as here in question "are *not Rubato* at all, but are merely a 'leaning' on a note"; these quite forget that unless every such leaning is *rectified elsewhere in that phrase*, it must inevitably imply a playing out of time. Every such leaning, therefore, necessarily implies a true Rubato, although of very slight extent. *See* note, page 72.

[2] *See* pages 79 and 120–1, and Section VI.



He then played the same bars without these inflections, showing how "wooden" the effect is without them.

Tone-amount varies with note-length in uneven passages.

Here it is well to call your attention to another matter, although it forms a digression from that upon which we are immediately engaged. Notice that the *tone-amount* itself must also vary with the varying lengths of the notes in such a passage. To be more explicit:

> When you play such a passage as we have just had, a passage consisting of notes differing as to their time-size — notes of various lengths — not only is it necessary to treat it as we have done (giving slightly longer time to the longer notes, and slightly shorter time to the shorter notes than is their due according to the written text) but we must also apply the *tone-inflections* in the same way — the shorter notes must be somewhat shorn of their tone. In this way we shall more nearly approximate the general effect to that of a sustaining instrument.[1]

[1] For we find, with a sustaining instrument, such as the Voice or Violin, etc., that the longer notes are bound to impress themselves upon the ear far more than do the shorter ones, since the full volume of tone may continue throughout the duration of the note on such instruments, whereas with the Pianoforte the beginning of a note necessarily forms a far stronger effect than does the remnant of tone which we, as pianists, imagine to be a "sustaining" of the note — for even with the best carrying, singing-touch quality, there remains always a certain amount of percussion in every Piano-sound. *See* also page 110 on Phrase-continuations.

In a slow movement, the tone for the quicker notes is reduced from a high background

Now, in a slow movement, these tone-variations should be thought of as being (for the quicker notes) a *cutting away* of the tone from the general tone-level, as in the Bach excerpt just given. That is, the main body of the passage here requires a considerably high volume of singing-tone, but we must relax from this normally high tone-level wherever the shorter notes occur. Listen to this Bach-passage once again, and observe now the process — the *mechanism* — of making a passage sound *un-mechanical.* I will play it slower, so that you may observe it better:

(The lecturer here repeated Exp. No. 30, pointing out the tone-inflections he used, all being of course quite *minute* inflections.)

To prove the case, hear it once again, given with all the notes of same tone value, and notice how ugly this sounds:

(The lecturer here once again played the bars in question, but without tone-inflections, after which he repeated them with the proper rendering.)

In a quick movement the reverse applies.

In a quick movement we have to do just the opposite. Here, instead of thinking the passage as of a large tone-level and cutting away (or lowering) the tone for the unimportant and quicker notes, we must proceed on a much lighter foundation, and must, in such quicker passages, *add* tone to this normally *low* tone-level wherever the accented notes occur; for instance the following, from Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata. (*See* Exp. 31, next page):

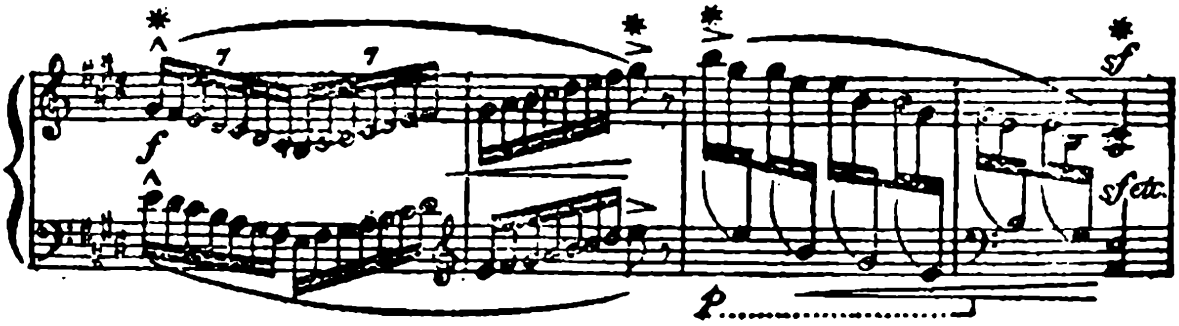
(The lecturer first played Exp. 31 with the requisite accentuation, then played it with its soft foundation touch only, then again with the proper accents added to this basis. He also gave as an example a few bars from his own Concert-study, "Bravura.") *See* Exp. 32, page 78.

EXAMPLE 31. (From Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata.)



(From "Bravura," — *Tobias Matthay.*[1])

EXAMPLE 32.



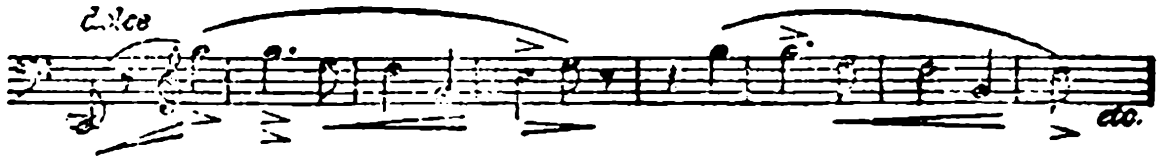
Here again, the accents are superimposed upon a light foundation.

But let us come back to our *Rubato* illustrations:

Further examples of "leaning" Rubato.

We had an example from Bach, let us now take one from Beethoven. The first subject from the last movement of the "Waldstein" Sonata will serve quite well, although the required Rubato is here quite slight and subtle. The beginning of the phrase here requires emphasis towards the second of the two *Gs*, while the further progress of the phrase towards its little climax must nevertheless be made clear. Now we should destroy the suave character of the tune, if we tried to show both of these points purely by tone emphasis. This would make it sound rough and raw, thus:

EXAMPLE 33*a*.

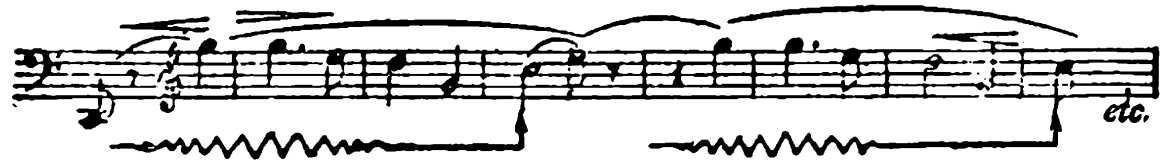


Hence we are compelled to resort to a slight — a very slight — Rubato. We must give a very slight Time-leaning towards and upon the second of the two *Gs*, and the extra time thus spent we must make up during the next three melody notes, so that we may regain the pulse precisely on the *C* — the climax-note of the motif. Our return to the pulse at this point will sufficiently emphasise it without any undue tonal

[1] By permission of Messrs. Ricordi.

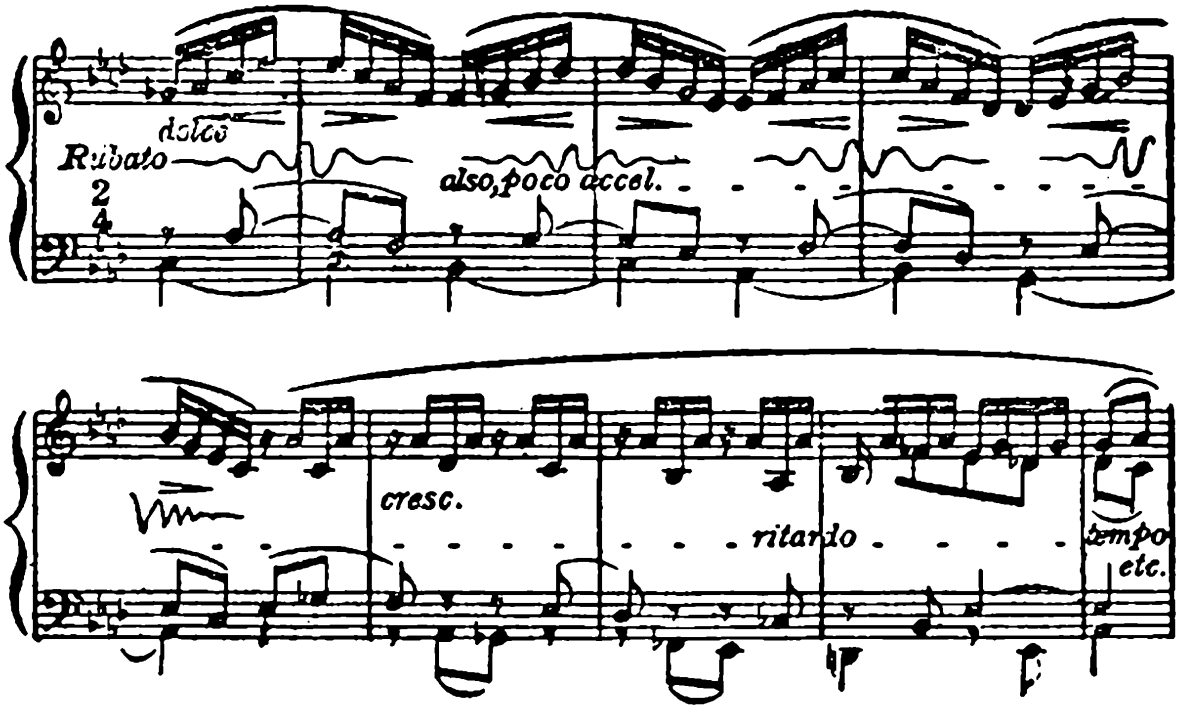
emphasis; and it will incidentally also connect the two short strains into one eight-bar phrase, thus:

EXAMPLE 33*b*.



For a *Rubato* of slightly longer extent in Bach and Beethoven let us take the second subject of Bach's Prelude in F minor (from the "48"), and the opening of the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata. I will first play these, trying to give them their proper feeling *without the use* of Rubato, and you will see that it is impossible. I will then play them both with the proper Time-curves (or Rubato) and you will see how the phrases at once leap into life:[1]

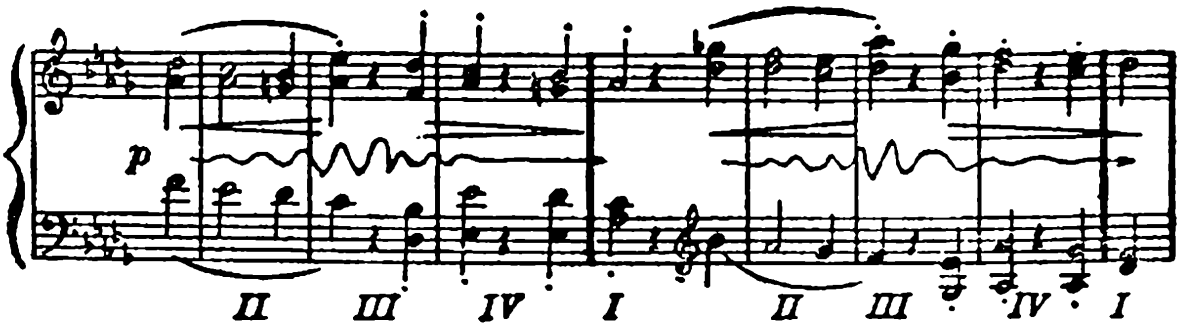
EXAMPLE 34.



[1] The reader, in trying to carry out these Rubato and Tone-inflections, must always remember that they are to be extremely slight and subtle. They must never become noticeable *as such* except to the analysing ear. *See* the remarks on this head on page 74. Remember Chopin's illustration to his pupil; he first blew gently upon the candle in front of him,

Rubato inflections must always be carried out subtly.

EXAMPLE 35.

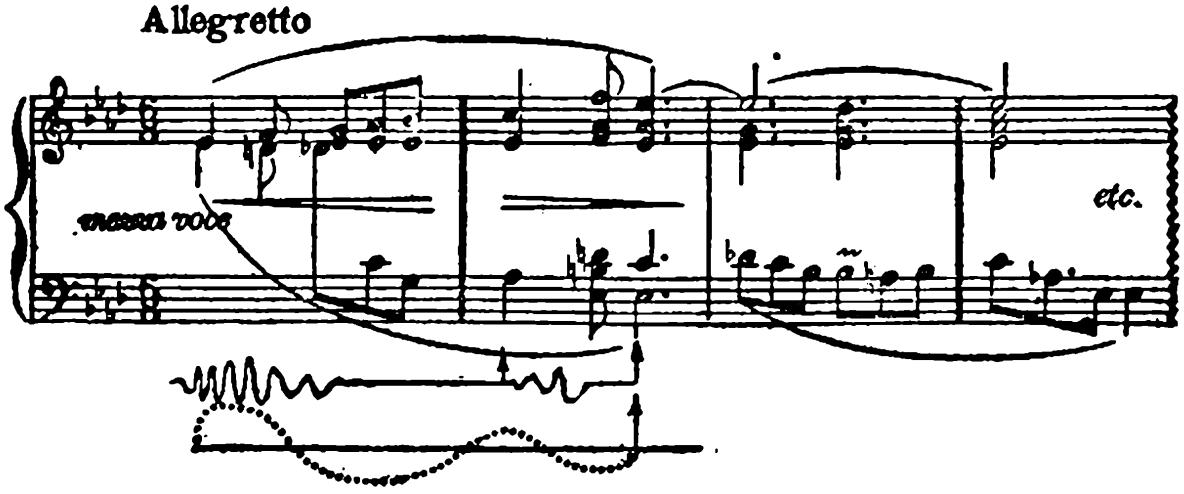


Example of Rubato analysis. Two bars of Chopin's Ballade in A flat.

As an example of a *Rubato* of similar character, but more marked, let us consider for a moment the opening phrase of Chopin's Ballade in A flat. How rarely, indeed, is this phrase given satisfyingly, or convincingly, even by the best players, except by sheer accident! This uncertainty as to success simply arises from the fact that the required Rubato has not been properly analysed nor understood. It is, therefore, worth while to analyse the Rubato here required, as it affords a striking instance of the supreme importance of accurate study and analysis of this process.

The *Rubato* in question occurs within the first two bars, but I will play four bars to give the phrase completeness, and will first play it without any vestige of Rubato, and then with it, thus:

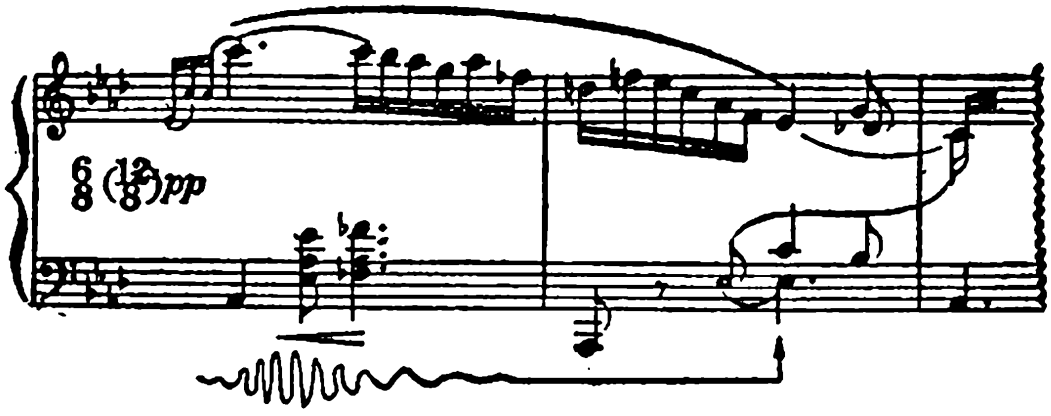
EXAMPLE 36*a*.



and, making it flicker, remarked: "See, that is *my* Rubato," he then blew the candle out, adding: "and that is *your* Rubato!" *See* note, p. 99.

The Time-signature $\frac{6}{8}$ is misleading, it should really have been notated as $\frac{1}{8}\frac{2}{.}$; and the piece, therefore, begins with a *half*-bar of this $\frac{1}{8}\frac{2}{.}$ time. The structure of the phrase is a swing towards the tonic chord; the opening E flat is therefore not a down-beat (as it looks in the original) but is an *up-beat* — a *syncopation* in fact; and as such it requires considerable tone and time-emphasis. This time-leaning on the opening E flat is the *cause* of the Rubato, and we are compelled to hasten the remaining quavers (eighth-notes) of that bar, so that we may swing back to the Pulse at the crisis of the phrase — the A-flat chord at the true bar-line.[1] In this way we are able to draw attention to it without undue tonal emphasis, while yet rendering clear the true rhythmical swing. This chief point of the phrase is followed by a "feminine" ending, and here again a very slight Rubato assists its rhythmical swing; and thus, you see, we really have a *double* Rubato in this simple little phrase. Here is another similar Rubato, from the same work:

EXAMPLE 36*b*.

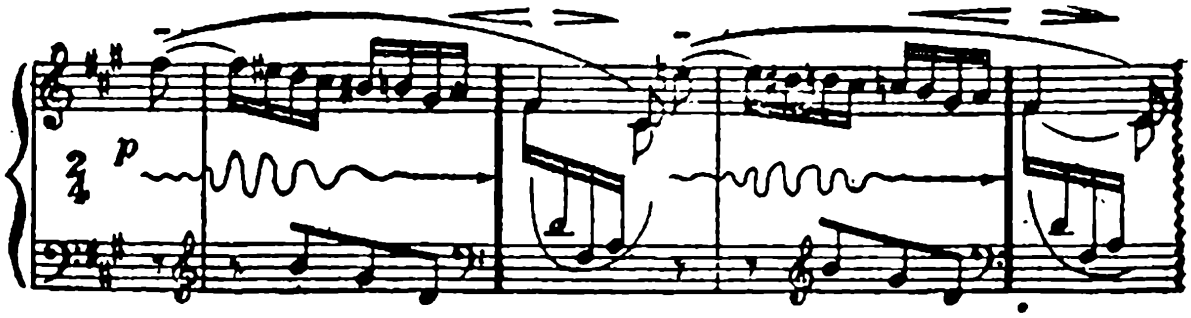


And here is yet another such "leaning" rubato, but in a quicker movement:

[1] The true bar-lines are here marked bolder than the false ones.

(From "Elves" — *Tobias Matthay.*[1])

EXAMPLE 36c.



For a somewhat more extended Rubato — a whole four-bar phrase with a time-*swell* in the middle of it — let us take Schumann's "Träumerei":

EXAMPLE 37.



Remember, such Time-curves must only be gentle wavelets, they must not be in the nature of earthquakes! *See* Note to Exp. 34, page 79.

Example of Rubato showing trend of phrase in spite of a *dim.*

To show you now how a Rubato will enable us to make clear a phrase-climax, or a main bar-line accent, *in spite of a diminuendo,* I will quote two themes from Beethoven and one from Chopin. *See* Exps. 38, 39 and 40:

[1] By permission of Messrs. Weekes and Co.

(From Beethoven's Op. 2, in C.[1])

EXAMPLE 38.



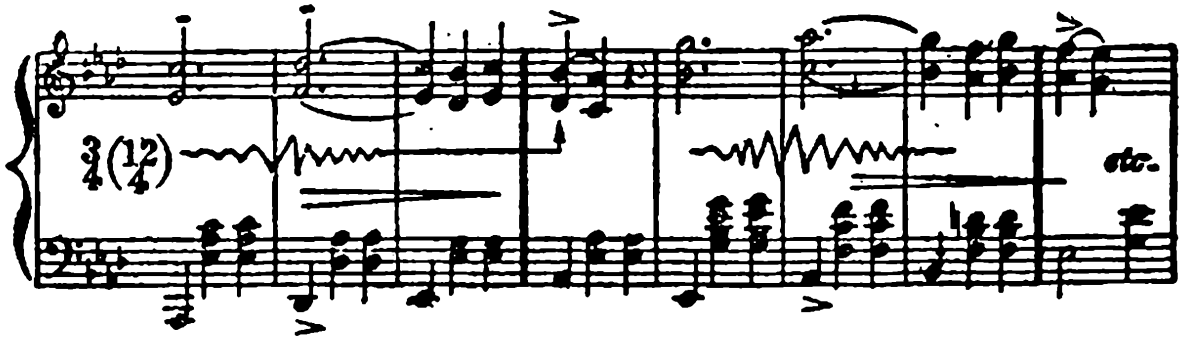
(From Beethoven's Op. 31, in G.[1])

EXAMPLE 39.



(From Chopin's Valse in A flat, Op. 34.[1])

EXAMPLE 40.



Example of Rubato showing cross-accent.

The three-bar rhythm of Chopin's *Andante Spianato* shows us how Rubato can make a phrase clear, in spite of its commencing with a cross-accent. As before, I will first play this *without* Rubato, and you will see how dead and stodgy

[1] Without this *slight* Rubato the phrase-accent cannot be shown here, since a crescendo towards it would be inappropriate; whereas its position is easily made clear with the Rubato swinging back to it. But this Rubato is again of a most diaphanous, gossamer type. *See* pp. 99 and 79.

it remains; I will then add the proper Rubato, when at once again, the phrase becomes alive — becomes vivid.[1]

(From Andante Spianato — *Chopin.*)

EXAMPLE 41.



Even in Beethoven we find exemplified this tendency to give a "leaning accent" (*i.e.*, a time or rubato emphasis) where the notes of a melody are syncopated; for instance, take the second part of the first subject of the Sonata, Op. 90.

Again the importance of scanning.

Here, again, you will realise how extremely important it is always to scan each phrase before playing it. How often, indeed, is the beautiful swing of this melody completely ruined, simply because the correct rhythm has not been noticed. Although written in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, it is really in $\frac{6}{4}$ time,

[1] Note that this analysis of the structure of the phrase proves it really to be in $\frac{6}{4}$ time, instead of the $\frac{3}{4}$ originally written. The phrase begins with a cross-accent (or syncopation) delivered on the second bar of such $\frac{6}{4}$ time, and the true phrase-climax is thus thrown on to the first of the next bar.

with the accent always on the alternate (*second*) one of the original $\frac{3}{4}$ bar-lines.

It must therefore *not* be played thus:

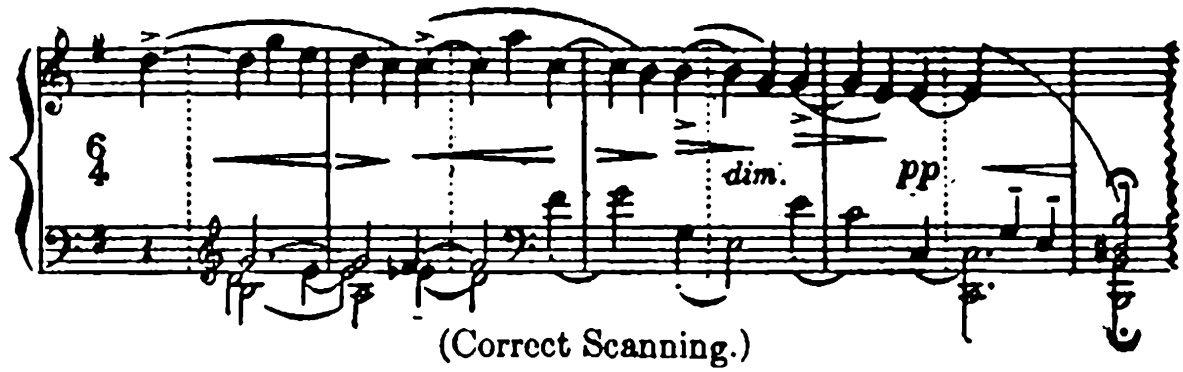
EXAMPLE 42*a*.



(Wrong Accentuation.)

But it should be *accented* thus:

EXAMPLE 42*b*.



(Correct Scanning.)

Or, in place of such rough tone-accents, it is still better to make this rhythm clear by means of slight rubatos; finally, thus: —

EXAMPLE 42*c*.



(The proper reading.)

Here is a still longer form of "leaning accent."

"Love-phases" No. 3. — Tobias Matthay.[1]

EXAMPLE 43.



Rubato required to depict agitation.

This leads me to point out that Rubato is most of all required to enhance emotionally-agitated strains. Indefinite emotions, such as persuasiveness, longing, yearning, etc., all need for their due expression much "give" and curve in their Pulse-progression.[2] An effect akin to fog, haze or "atmosphere" is thus produced on the ear; for the details here become in a measure veiled, as in an impressionist picture. Much of Brahms, Debussy, etc., needs such blurring by means of the Time-swerve — and also by means of much *over*-pedalling and *half*-pedalling; while Chopin and Schumann are, of course, quite impossible without the constant application of such Time-swerves.[3]

[1] By permission of Messrs. Joseph Williams.

[2] Or, in other words, the *elision* (or omission) of the *closely-reiterated* Pulse-throbs, and the substitution of Pulse-throbs recurring at far *longer* intervals of time.

Always shapeful, however veiled the shapes.

[3] Such time-swerving, however, must be always in the nature of true Rubato, and must never be allowed to deteriorate into time-breaking and rhythmical chaos. Granted, that veiled shapes are beautiful, sometimes even more so than those of clear-cut definition, nevertheless it is the presence of Shape, however veiled it may be, which renders them beautiful.

The cry of some of our young tentative composers that Time and Key

Definiteness, decision, best expressed without Rubato inflections.

On the other hand, when we do wish to express Definiteness or Decision in Music, such as we find in all music which is the expression of sheer vitality, aggressiveness, etc., then we must make each detail as clear as a sunlit day. For the portrayal of such feelings we must avoid Rubato so far as possible; and thus it happens that the music of Beethoven, with its appeal to all that is vital and fresh, and clean in life, and great in the Universe, for the most part demands almost the suppression of this far-reaching element, Rubato, except in the quite subservient and minute fashion already indicated, and except in the slow movements of his later Sonatas, where the feeling approximates so much more than in his earlier works to the intimate and immediate expression of self-mood — a characteristic of the so-called romantic school.

Illustrations of these distinctions emotionally.

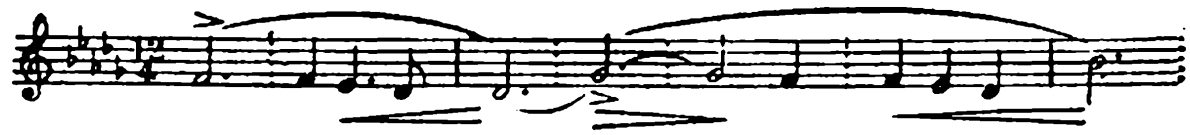
To make these points of contrast clearer, let me give you, as an example of the first kind, the wonderful tune from Chopin's Scherzo in B flat minor, with its feelings of wild longing. Without Rubato it would be impossible to make this rhythm clear — for this tune commences with a rising inflection, or cross accent. Instead of the written $\frac{3}{4}$ time, this movement is really in $\frac{12}{4}$ time; and the tune com-

are merely "the remnants of an old, exploded Scholasticism," of course merely proves that they have failed to grasp the facts which form the very basis of all musical art. Debussy himself, however, the strongest exponent of this new modernism, whose mannerisms they all try to imitate, has nevertheless a very fine sense both of Rhythm and of Key-relationship, although he purposely and skilfully veils both in favour of the exigencies of expression required by his musical individuality.

Another reason for the application of Rubato in such extremely emotional music may perhaps be found in the fact that agitation causes our heart-beats to vary — causes acceleration in the heart's action; and it would therefore be but logical to swerve and hasten our musical Pulse-beats when we wish to convey to the listener a sense of agitation.

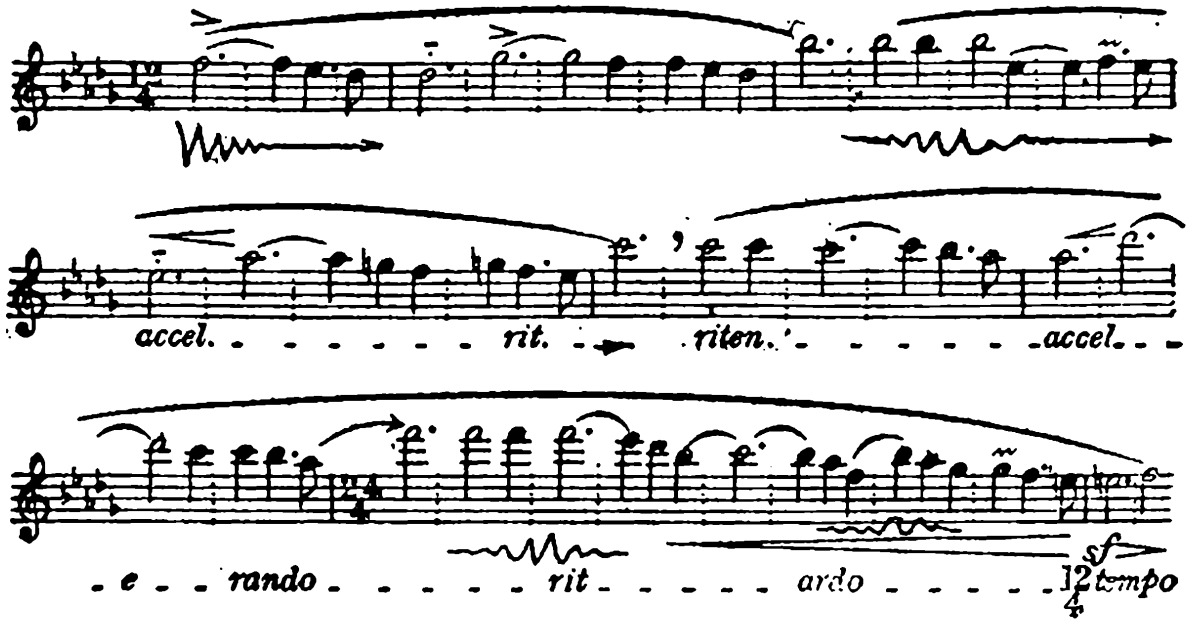
mences at the half bar of this compound-quadruple time, thus: —

EXAMPLE 44.



To show how greatly *Rubato* does help us in such a case, it is well to play through the whole tune, first without any vestige of time-inflections, and then with these added, thus: —

EXAMPLE 45.



Now let us contrast the wild feeling here portrayed by the Time-swerve with an example from Chopin, where he wishes to be decisive, one might say almost truculent — the first subject from the Scherzo in C sharp minor:

EXAMPLE 46.



See how untrue this rings if it is played with wild Rubatos, as I have had it brought to me:

(Illustrated.)

The effect of the *absence* of Rubato here is heightened by the composer introducing this subject after a long Recitative-like Introduction of an exceedingly free nature.

Mis-scanning of Chopin Scherzos again.

As I find this is so often misplayed and strummed through like a badly practised exercise, I will play it to you as I feel it should be construed. Notice how the octave A in the final *Recit.* is really a syncopation.[1] *See* Exp. 47:

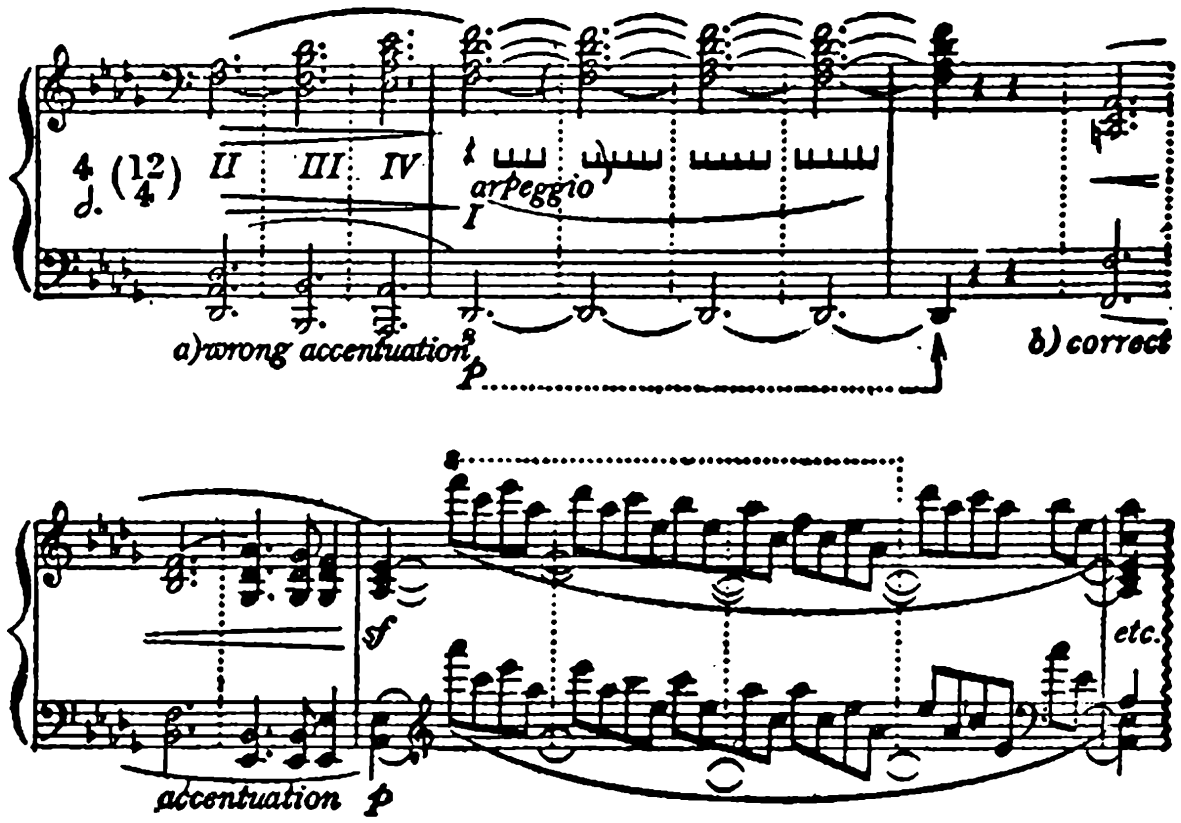
[1] Apropos of this, and the inaccurate notation and phrasing of Chopin, M. Peru "the only surviving pupil of Chopin" in an interview reprinted in the "Musical Herald" says: "As to his methods of composition, they were, contrary to popular opinion, most laborious. He had the habit of first writing down his ideas, then trying over what he had written at the piano and correcting it over and over until hardly a note of the original remained." . . . "When asked to put in marks of expression he put them in carelessly, never playing his pieces as they appeared in print, and marking a pedal at the beginning of each bar without paying the least attention to the sense of the music. His own pedalling was most extraordinary. His foot was constantly bobbing up and down so as to produce the effect of constant pedal but also constant sharpness." . . . "Chopin's interpretation of his own music was never twice alike, yet always perfect. He played with very sudden and sharp nuances, and frequent changes of time. As to what we call 'classical interpretation,' that had no meaning for him. Everything was beauty, and even a fugue he made not a dry exercise but a thing of genuine poetic charm . . ." *See* also Notes, pp. 39, 71, and Section V, Pedalling

EXAMPLE 47.


Presto
rit.
p
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
cresc.
f
lento
tempo (Presto)
I
sf
II
III
p
rit.
mf
Recit.
rit.
ff
p
ff lento
rit.
sf
sf
tempo
Risoluto

Curious too, and unaccountable, the mis-scanning of the Chorale later on in this work, even by otherwise capable musicians. How often do I hear it played upside down, rhythmically! (*See a* Exp. 48.) Instead of, as it should be, *see b*, Exp. 48.

EXAMPLE 48.



One of the most wonderful Rubato effects is found in the Chopin *Berceuse*. I will play this to you, and you will see that the *Rubato* here often extends from the beginning to the end of each two-bar phrase, sometimes indeed being spread over four whole bars, and thus lengthening two short phrases into one of double the length. Each four-bar phrase is here transformed into one single bar — *one single complete pulsation*, or Swing of Rhythm; each complete phrase returning to the *straight* line of Pulse or Beat only once

during the life of this complete phrase — at its rhythmical climax.[1]

Notice also, that while the right hand is thus at liberty to follow the player's fancy (but always strictly within the bounds of each complete phrase) the left hand, on the contrary, in the meantime keeps almost perfectly straight time all through the piece — with almost accurate reiterations of the three beats of each half-bar.

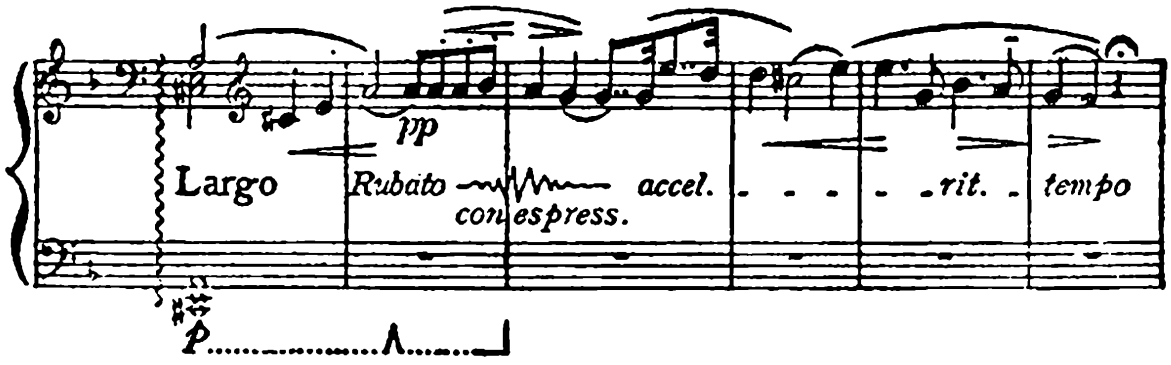
(The lecturer here played Chopin's Berceuse.)

Illustrations of Rubato continued: (II) the push-on or inverted Rubato.

So far, these examples have been in the more frequent form of Rubato, viz.: that beginning with an extra expenditure of time, which is subsequently balanced by an *accellerando* back to the beat near the end of the motif or phrase. We will now take some examples of the opposite, or "inverted" form of Rubato, wherein we commence by pushing-on or hastening the time, and subsequently return to our true pulse, by a proportionate slowing-up or retardation towards the end of the phrase, etc. This device is particularly required where Agitation is to be expressed. *See* Examples 49 to 56:

From Beethoven's, Op. 31, in D minor.

EXAMPLE 49.

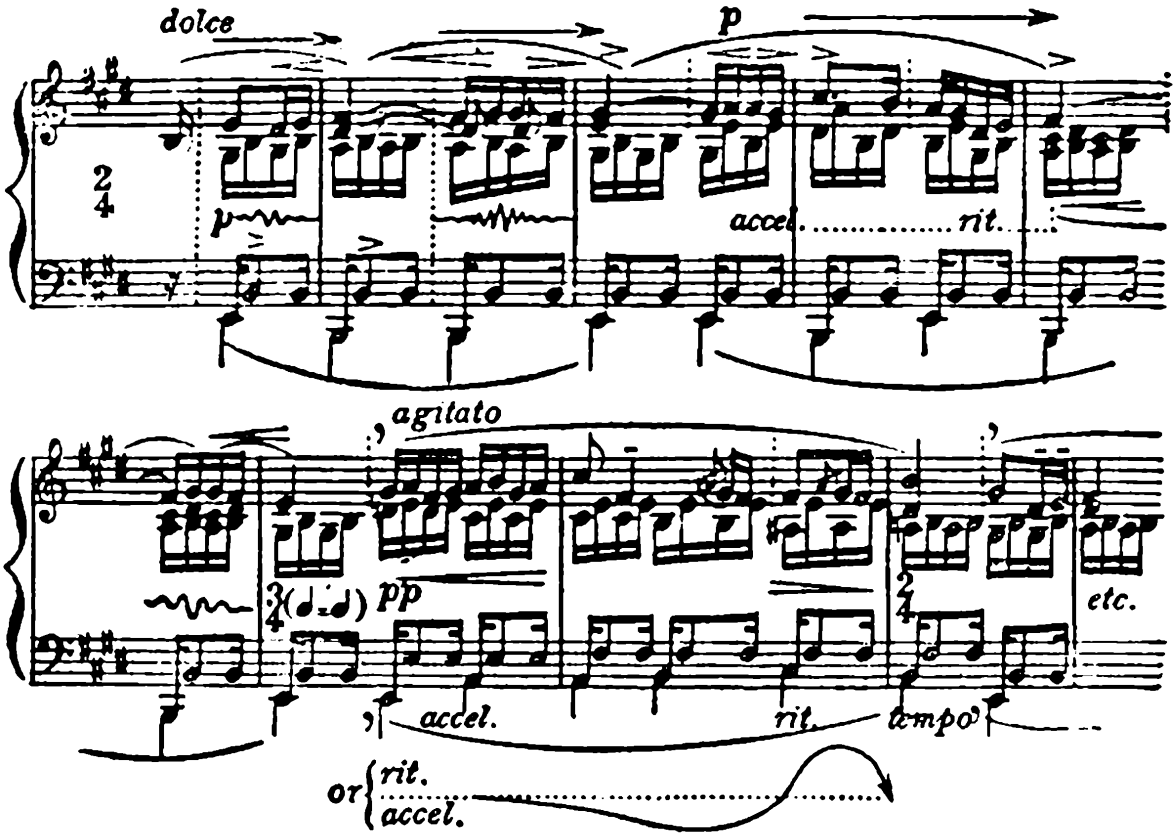


(*a*) This sign _∧_ denotes a "half-pedalling" effect. *See* Section V.

[1] Such instances of long Rubatos — and longer ones — abound in the works of Chopin and Schumann, and more recent writers.

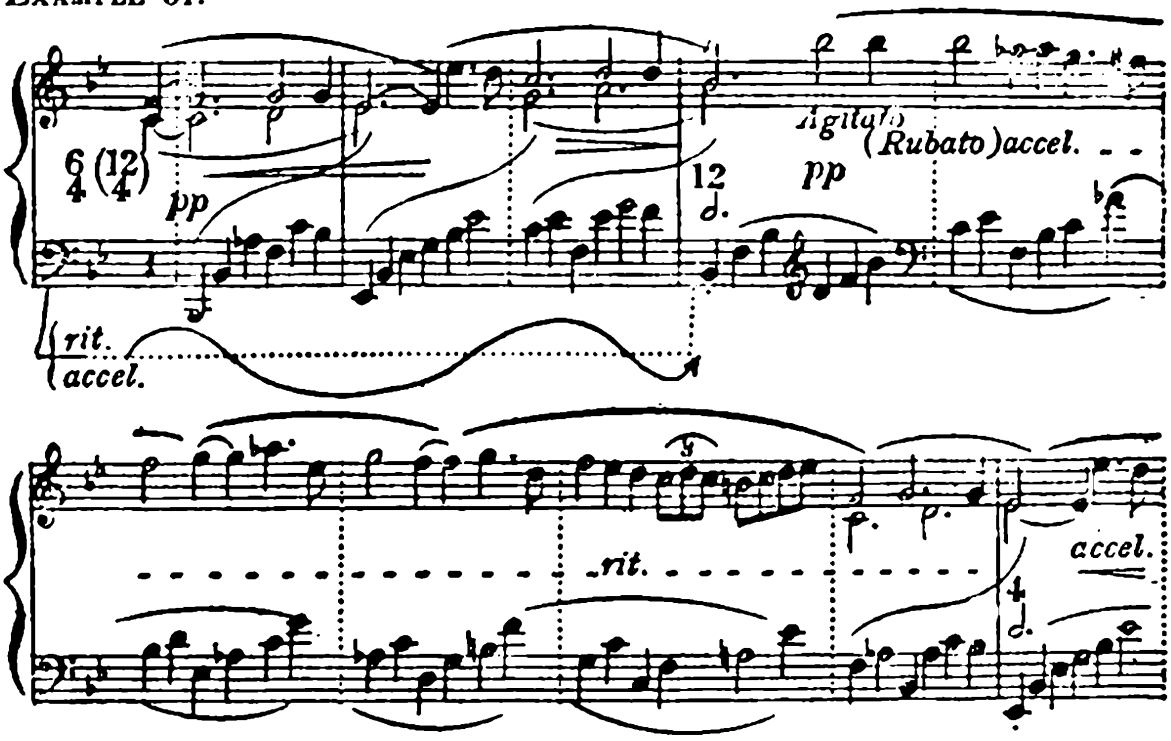
EXAMPLE 50.

Chopin's Etude in E.[1]



Episode from Chopin's Ballade in G minor.

EXAMPLE 51.



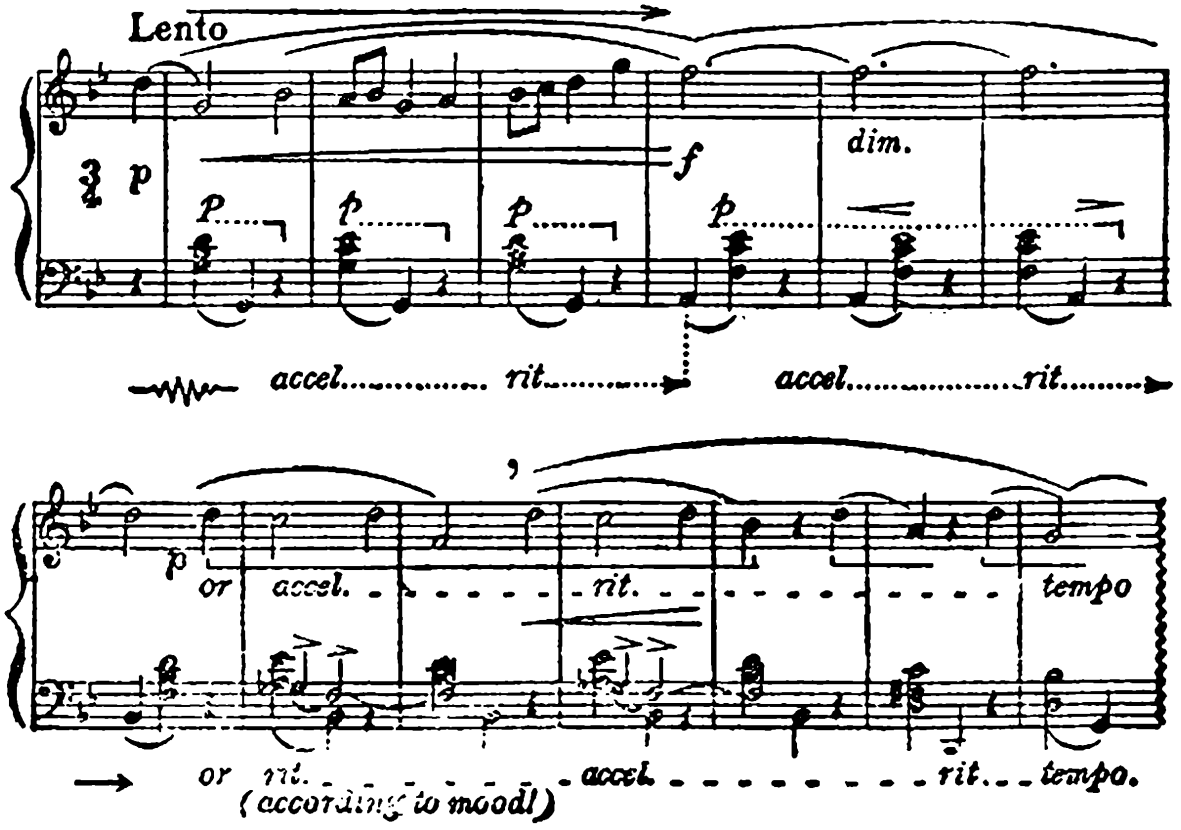
[1] The dotted bar-lines here are Chopin's; they are quite misleading, and the proper bar-lines and "scanning" are here indicated by ordinary bar-lines.



This really begins with a *half-bar* of $\frac{1}{4}$ time.

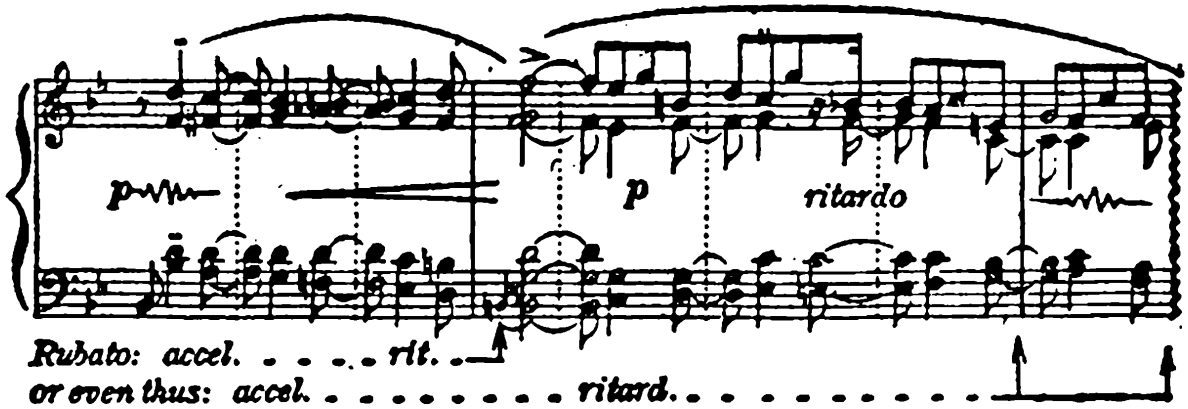
Chopin's Nocturne in G minor.

EXAMPLE 52.



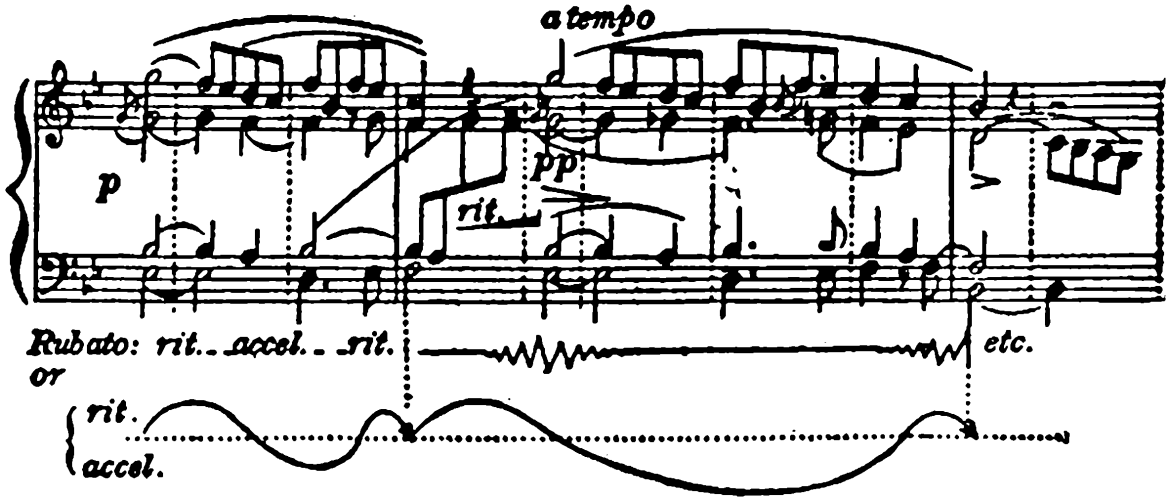
Second subject from Schumann's Sonata in G minor.

EXAMPLE 53*a*.



Episode from the last movement of same Sonata.

EXAMPLE 53*b*.

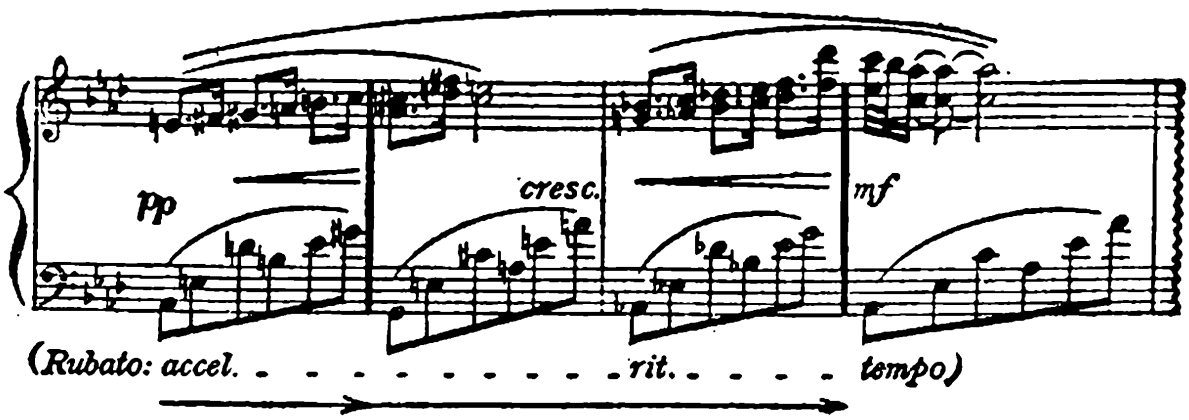


Nocturne from York Bowen's "Miniature Suite," No. 1.[1]

EXAMPLE 54.

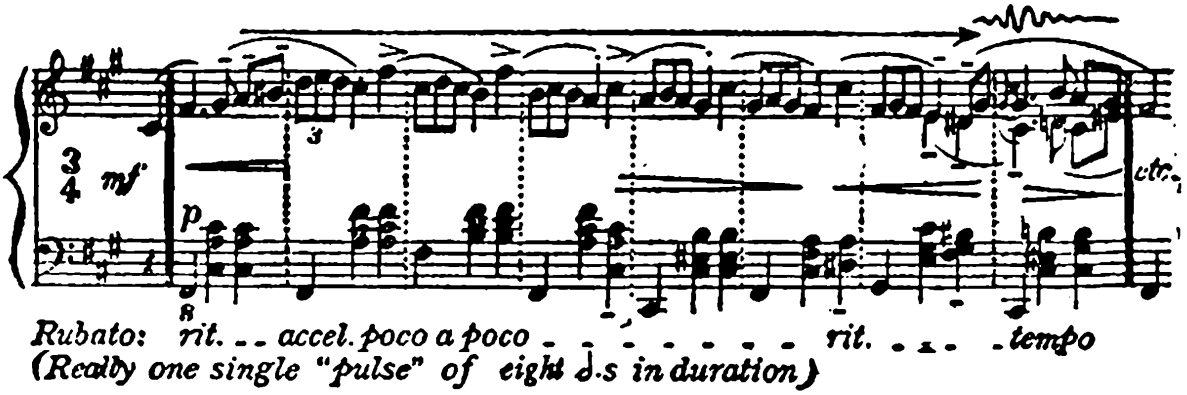


[1] By permission of the composer (Avison Edition).



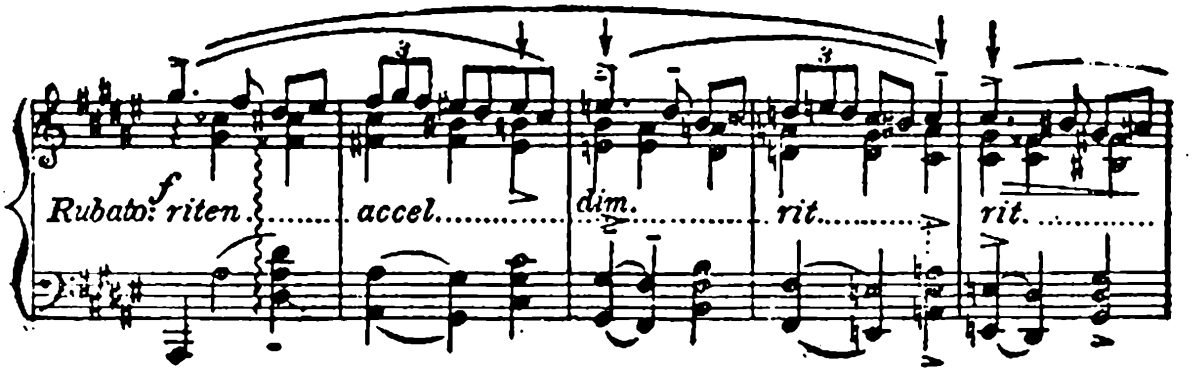
Chopin's Mazurka in F sharp minor. (Op. 59).

EXAMPLE 55*a*.



Here we have an eight-bar Rubato, and the trio of the same Mazurka shows us how two-bar phrases, or motifs, etc., can be bound together into one four-bar phrase, thus:

EXAMPLE 55*b*.





The vertical arrows here denote the *only* places where the written rhythm really coincides with the *played* "Time-spot" — all the remaining bars and beats are off the *straight-on* line of beats.

Another, and to my mind very striking instance of this form of Rubato, is found in the second strain of the second subject of Chopin's Sonata in B flat minor. The whole of these eight bars should be played without any recurrence to the *straight-on* line of Pulse till the resolution of this strain, which occurs upon the first note of the repetition of the first strain of the subject, at the forte; thus:

EXAMPLE 56.



This complete sentence consists therefore of one single incomplete *long* bar of $\frac{12}{1}$ time, finishing at *f*, and commencing on the fifth beat of this long bar.

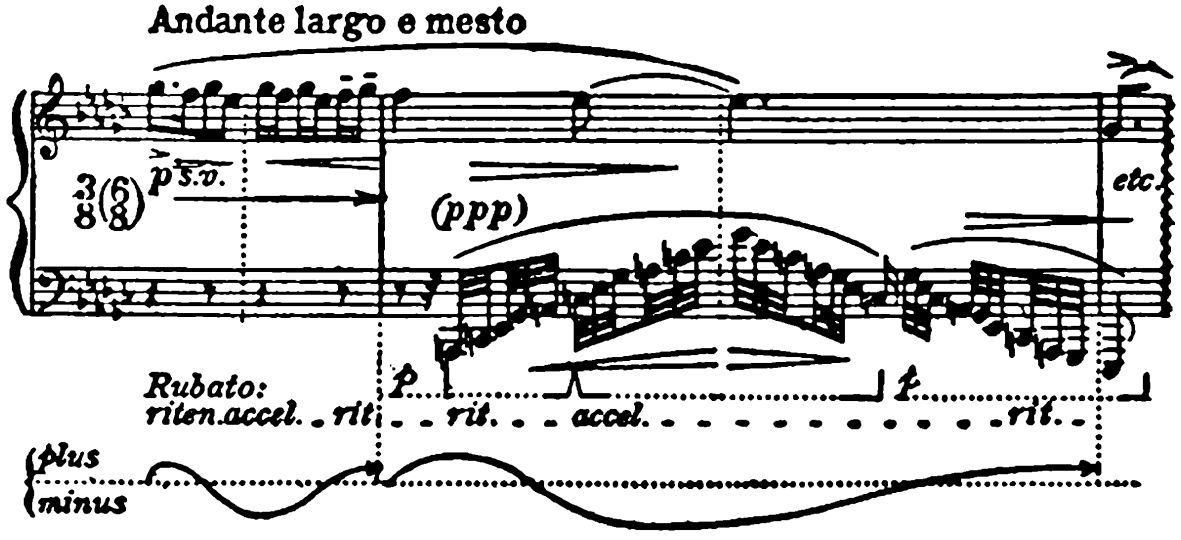
Examples of the combination of the two forms of Rubato.

These two fundamental forms of Rubato are also often found in close combination, but the rules just given apply with equal force; for we must always arrange to arrive "home" upon the pulse at the climax of the phrase, or

section, or "motif" as the case may be. For instance, the first strain of the Episode from Chopin's G minor Ballade which I quoted recently is a case in point, for it really needs such a combination of both forms of Rubato within its short life. Refer to Exp. 51 on page 93.

Another very definite and yet closely condensed example of such *compound-rubato*, within the compass of one short phrase, I feel in the opening bars of Brahms' Intermezzo in E flat minor, Op. 118. To enable us to obtain the intensely poignant effect of this phrase, we begin here with a "leaning rubato," but instead of completing this as usual, by making a corresponding acceleration straight back to the pulse at the climax of the phrase, we must here push-on the time so considerably as to swing back, not merely to the true pulse-line, but *beyond* it, and thus induce a well-marked *ritardo* upon the last two or three notes before finally regaining the pulse at the climax-note. It is well first to play the phrase through, perfectly non-rubato, and then to repeat it, giving the required compound-rubato, when you will realise how these time-inflections really are part and parcel of the musical sense:

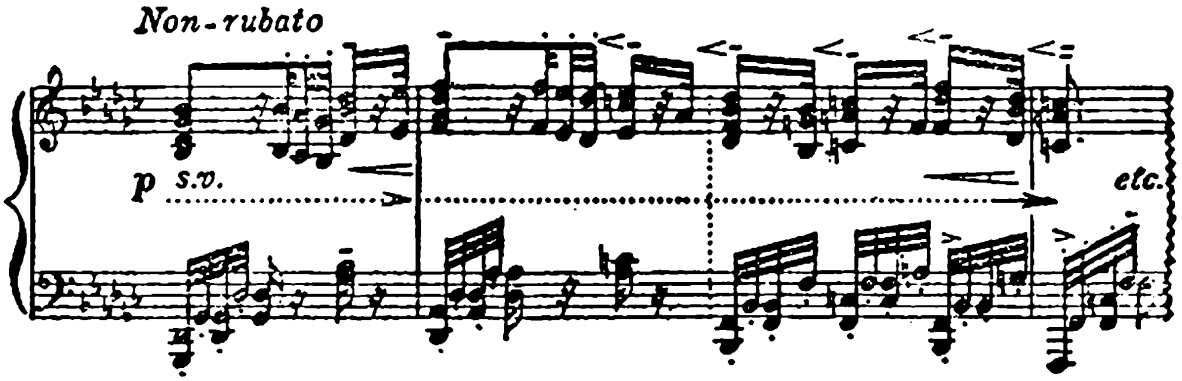
EXAMPLE 57*a*.



Again, this Rubato-curve must be given most subtly — a life-giving breath, not a scenery-rocking earthquake! Do not try to express *the rubato*, but use it to express the intense feeling concentrated in this phrase. *See* pages 74 *Text*, and 79 *Note*.

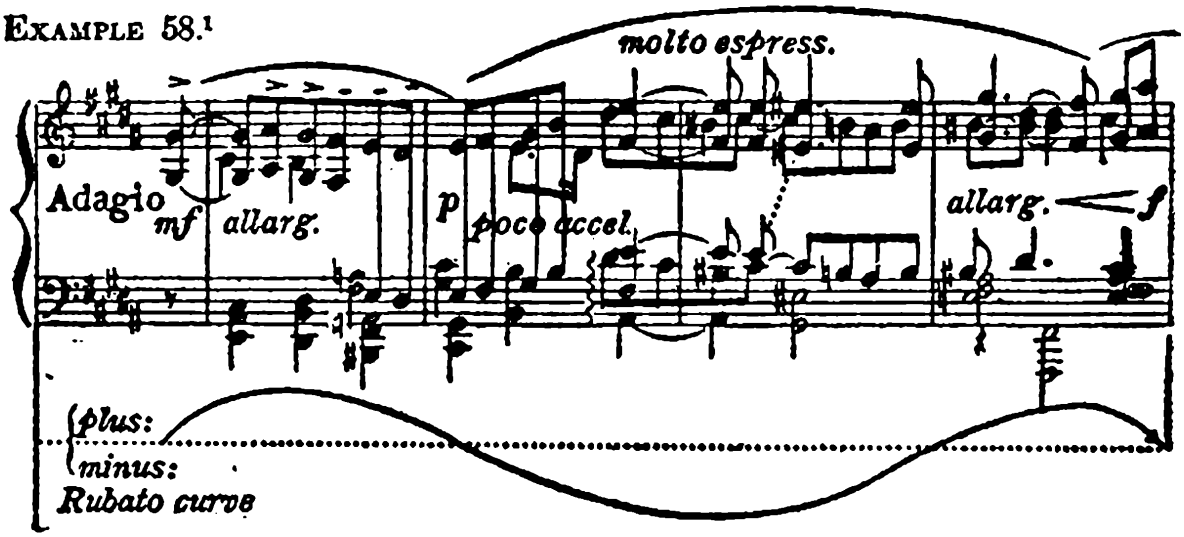
The March-like episode (or Trio) of this Intermezzo, with its fatalistic feeling, forms an instructive example of sheer emotional effect gained by the *absence* of rubato in this case, for this strain should be given with hardly a vestige of rubato; and the contrast of its straightness and squareness, after the preceding wild rubatos, is most striking:

EXAMPLE 57*b*.



As another very instructive example of compound Rubato, let me play you a few bars from the wonderful Variations from Benjamin Dale's Sonata in D minor:

EXAMPLE 58.[1]



[1] By permission of the composer, (Avison Edition).

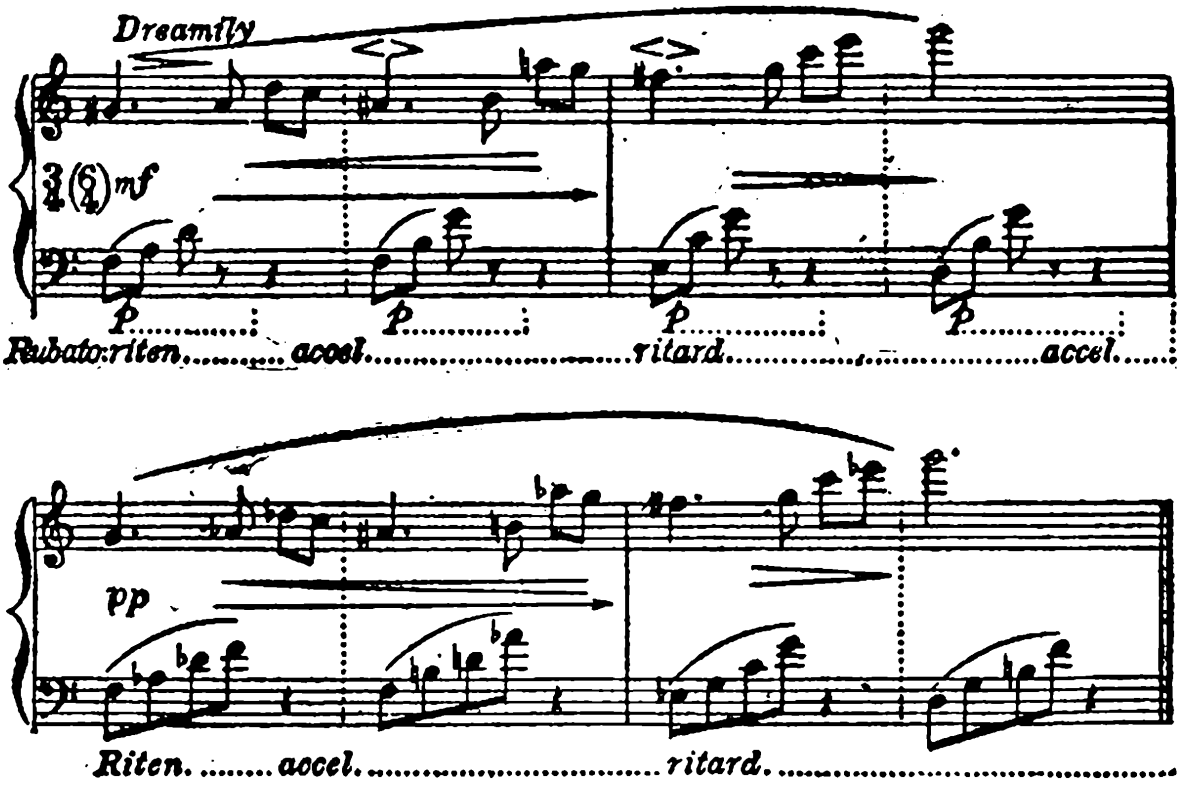


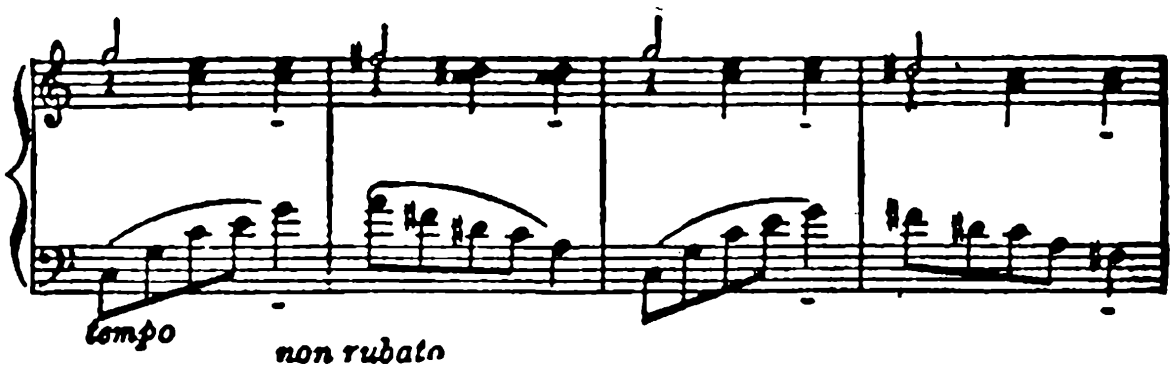
Here we have a "leaning" Rubato combined with a "push-on" Rubato in one single phrase, and the *plus* time at its beginning and at its end must be precisely balanced by the *minus* time in the centre of the phrase, so as to bring us back to the pulse at the climax.

As further examples of compound Rubato, here are three from Schumann:

From Papillons (No. 10).

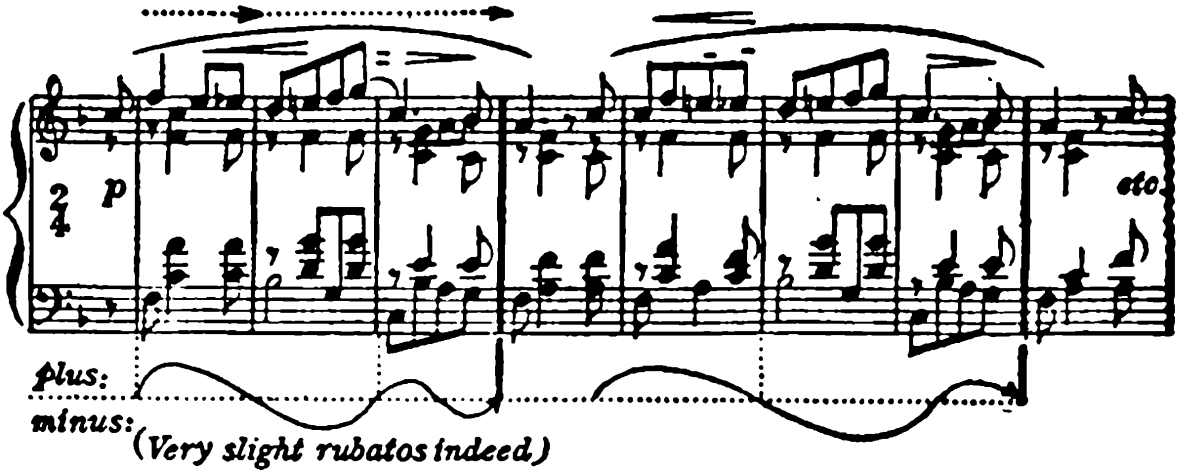
EXAMPLE 59.





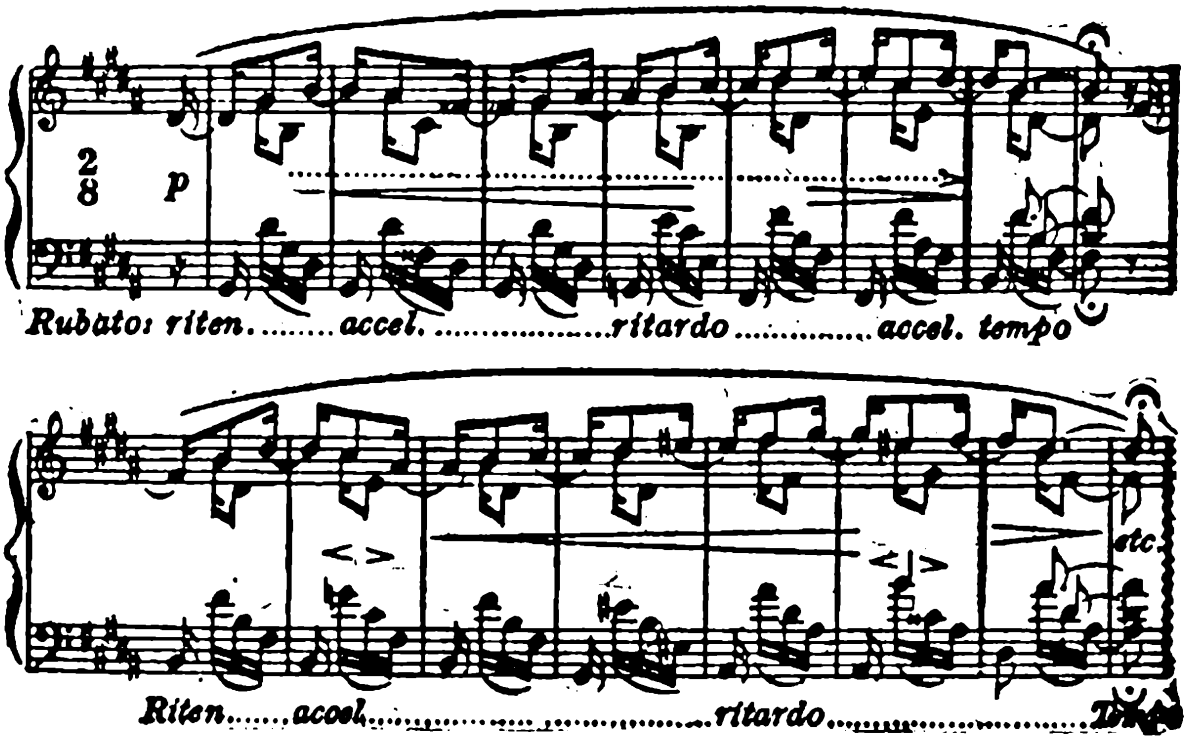
From Kinderscenen ("Am Kamin").

EXAMPLE 60.



From Kinderscenen ("Fast zu ernst").

EXAMPLE 61.



And here is one from Claude Debussy — his charming Valse, "La plus que lente:"[1]

EXAMPLE 62.



Modern Rubato examples from Beethoven.

Even Beethoven understood the value of a true *modern* Rubato, in his later works.[2]

As examples of this, consider the following two passages from his Op. 110 and Op. 111 respectively, *where he has tried to notate* such true Rubatos: —

From the Adagio of Op. 110, Beethoven.

EXAMPLE 63.

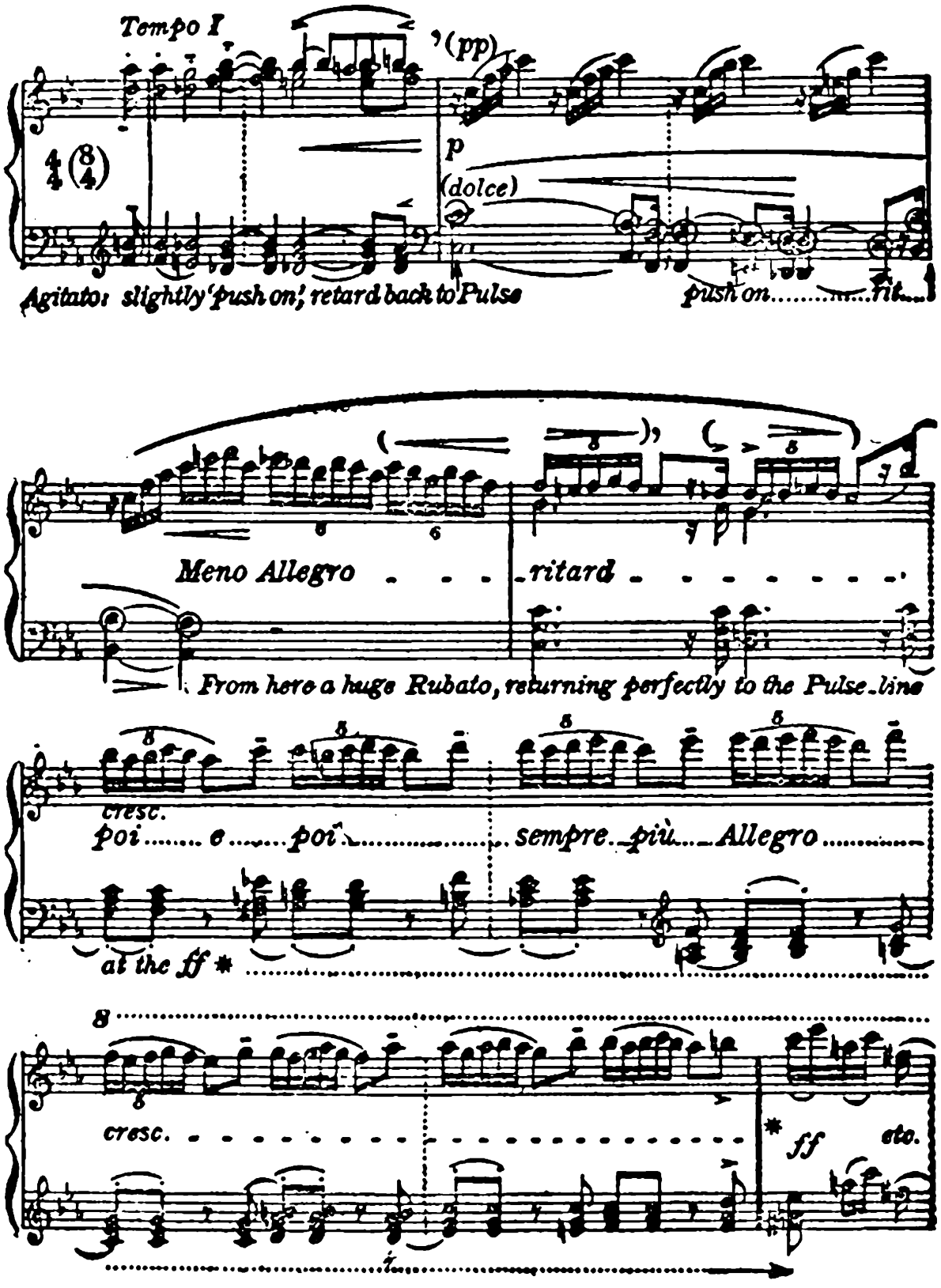


[1] By kind permission of Durand et Cie., publishers and proprietors.

[2] So did Bach — one has only to realise the true meaning, for instance, of the Recitatives of his Chromatic Fantasia!

From first movement of Op. 111, Beethoven.

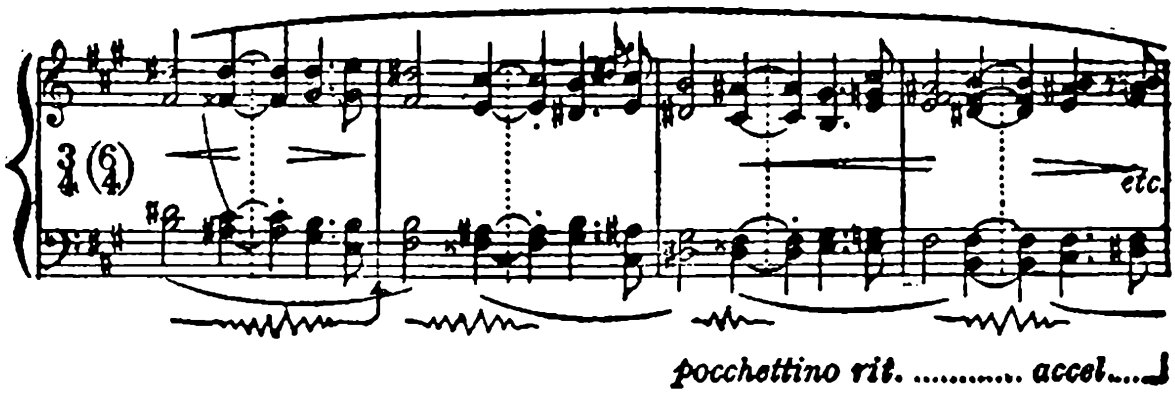
EXAMPLE 64.



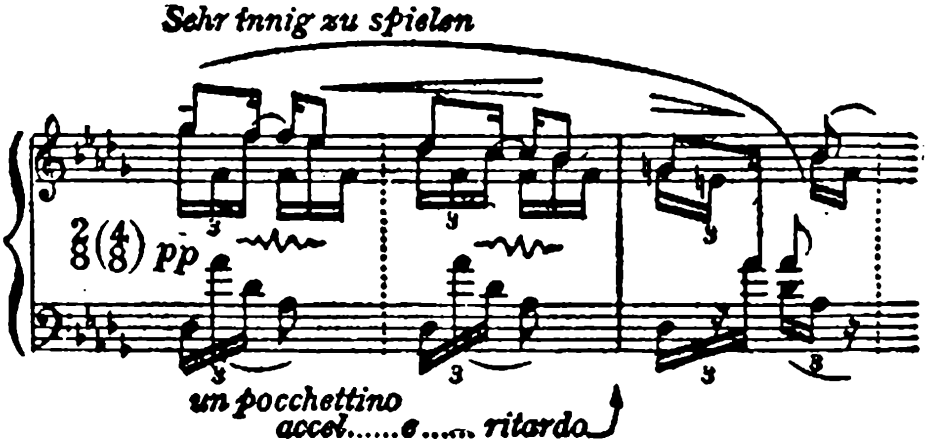
Rubato shows accent on a rest or tied note.

To show you now, how a Rubato can enable us to show a pulse, or accent, even *in the absence of any note sounded on the pulse,* listen to the second subject from the last movement of Schumann's Concerto, and the beginning of his "Des Abends" from the Phantasiestücke:

EXAMPLE 65.



EXAMPLE 66.



Rubato always in the nature of a curve never a time-spike.

Another point, self-evident enough, which is only too often overlooked in attempting to give Rubato, is, that Rubato must always be more or less in the nature of a *curve* — it must be applied over more than one single note. Otherwise, in place of a beautifully curved effect (the very purpose of *Rubato*) we shall have time-spikes (notes actually out of time) sticking out all over our performance — spikes just as uncomfortable as physical spikes.[1] For instance, I have

[1] *See* Notes, pp. 72 and 74.

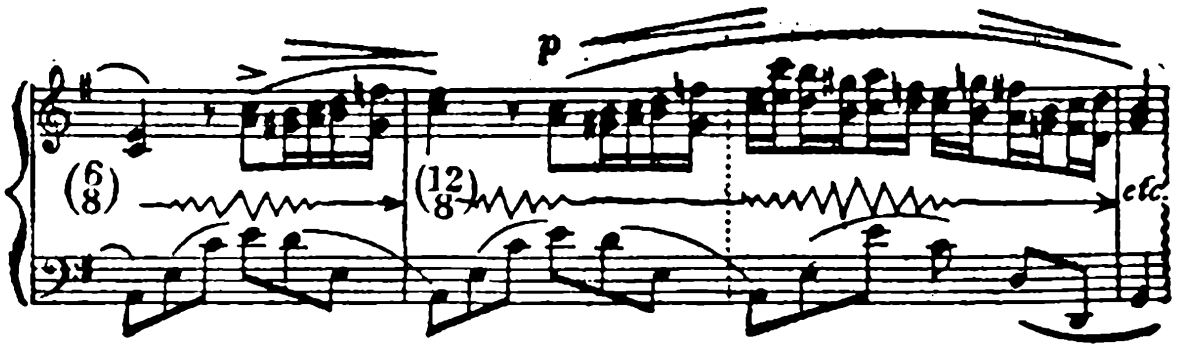
heard quite a good artist-pupil play the opening phrase of Chopin's Nocturne in G in such spike-rubato fashion in her attempts to supply the something felt to be necessary. I will show you the fault and its correction:[1]

EXAMPLE 67.

a) Incorrect: *tempo Allo..... tempo Allo.. tempo.....*



b) Correct Rubato



To make such a mistake seems absurd enough, but it really was a most honest endeavour, made by a thoroughly earnest and in many ways experienced musician and teacher. It arose from the fact that she had not been allowed to apply Rubato when she was a young student, and could easily have learnt its true application; but her teachers had discountenanced such supposed frivolities — because they knew not how to *teach* Rubato.

[1] May I warn the reader once again to be careful, in giving the Rubato-inflections shown in these examples, to render them all subtly — not as gross, noticeable Ritardos and Accellerandos, but as gentle curves, quite unnoticeable *as such* except to the earnestly analysing ear. *See* page 74 *Text*, and page 99 *Note*.

Always keep in view musical purpose, during Rubato-inflections.

Hence, later on, when her natural musical feeling prompted her to cut herself adrift from the miserable straight-lacedness of her schooling, she had no knowledge or experience to guide her. All I had to do in her case, was to make clear the process really required, and that instead of a pause on the first note alone, a soft time-curve was required, distributed over the whole bar; and immediately, in place of her previous caricature of the Nocturne (or "affected reading" as the Music-critic usually characterises any fault he is unable exactly to diagnose) she gave me the passage with due expression of the feeling which she had quite well perceived, but which she had been unable to express before, purely owing to her ignorance of the required process.

Here again, the moral is, that everyone should be taught while still young enough to learn things easily, and should be taught everything by direct, logical explanation of the means of obtaining correct expression. Only too often is the latent feeling and perception of a pupil left unexpressed, solely owing to such interpretative-technical deficiencies as we have just discussed.